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THESIS

STATE STRENGTH AND GUERRILLA POWER: THE
EQUILIBRIUM BETWEEN THE COLOMBIAN
GOVERNMENT AND THE GUERRILLA GROUPS

by

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December 1996

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THE COLOMBIAN GOVERNMENT AND THE GUERRILLA GROUPS**

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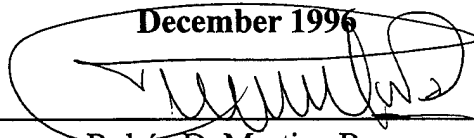
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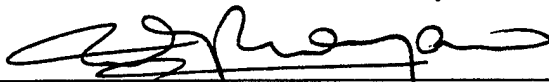
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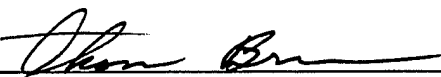


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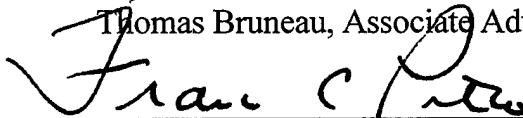
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ABSTRACT

This study addresses the question of whether there is an equilibrium between the Colombian government and the guerrilla groups. This subject is addressed for the purpose of gaining an understanding and finding answers to Colombia's violent political conflict.

The study argues that there is an equilibrium between the government and the guerrilla groups. The author uses three variables, the military balance, the peasant support for the guerrillas, and the weakness of the state, to discuss the equilibrium and its effect in this conflict.

In conclusion, the author maintains that the equilibrium between the actors in the conflict is not structural, but is a circumstance of the effects of both the narco-trafficking and the failure of the judicial system. If this balance is to change, action must be taken on two fronts, narco-trafficking and the judicial system.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CCN	National Conciliatory Commission
CGSB	Guerrilla National Organization "Simón Bolívar"
Cp	Company
CM	Mobile Column
CUO	Unified Eastern Command
CUS	Unified South Command
ELN-UC	National Liberation Army-Camilita Union
EJC	Colombian National Army
EMA	Headquarters staff area (ELN)
EPL	Popular Liberation Army
FAC	Colombian Air Force
FARC-EP	Colombian Revolutionary Armed Forces-People's Army
FU	Urban Front
M-19	April 19th Movement
MOEC	Worker-Student- Peasant-Movement
PPC	Colombian Communist Party
OEA	Organization of American States
UP	Patriotic Union

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study demonstrates that there is an equilibrium in the violent political conflict in Colombia. This study deals with several questions, among the most important are the following:

- Why hasn't the equilibrium between the Colombian government and the guerrilla groups been broken or changed by events such as the collapse of the Soviet Union and communism?
- Does the equilibrium work to the advantage of either side (or both sides)?
- Has the government a solid national policy or solid strategy to deal with the guerrilla groups?
- Is the government following the right political program to undermine the peasants' support for the guerrillas?
- What has been the effect of narco-trafficking on the growth of the guerrilla groups?
- What are the conditions for the process of the consolidation of democracy in Colombia to unfold?

The importance of this topic bears directly on the current situation in Colombia. The present conflict in Colombia is characterized by two factors: political corruption and the effect of narco-trafficking on society. These factors do not allow the government to create an effective solution to this complex violent political struggle. In other words, these factors will not allow the government to create a policy that leads to a change in the balance among the actors in the struggle.

Colombia's guerrilla conflict is unique in Latin America because narco-trafficking is an ingredient of the unstable political situation. This contributes to a weak state. This factor is not present in some other Latin American guerrilla conflicts, including Cuba and Guatemala. However, this phenomenon of guerrillas and narco-trafficking has appeared in El Salvador, Perú and even Nicaragua, but not on the scale as in the Colombian case. It

appears clear that the guerrilla groups have been able to increase their power because the narco-trafficking has increased the groups' financial resources.

Chapter II will analyze the strength and the military capacity of the guerrilla groups in terms of organization, strategy, finances, location, political and military objectives, and external aid. This will be compared with the military power of the government in terms of informal pressures, organization and strategic distribution, internal resources, U.S. assistance, operational results, and the role of the Armed Forces as a political actor in this conflict.

Chapter III will analyze peasant support for the guerrillas. Before beginning the explanation of this variable it is very important to present the concepts of Timothy Wickham-Crowley. Wickham-Crowley holds that:

The three measures of degree of peasant support are: How many peasants are willing to commit resources to the guerrilla cause? What kind of resources are these persons willing to commit to the guerrillas? Under what range of circumstances will they commit that resource?¹

This study analyzes the peasant support for the guerrilla groups, in terms of open political support, Regional legacies, local influence issues, the narco-guerrilla's concept and the cocalero support (or peasant self-interest). Additional dimensions are addressed: the levels of peasant support, the process of resources committed, and the different methods of guerrilla recruitment.

Chapter IV addresses the weakness of the state and the emergence of dual power in Colombia. This is another important variable in the theory established by Timothy Wickham-Crowley. This theory concerns the success or failure of guerrilla revolutionary movements in Latin America. Military strength and peasant support are not enough to ensure a successful revolution. A situation of multiple sovereignty or dual power must also exist. The passive members of a society must transfer their consent from the incumbent to the new governments. Wickham-Crowley attempts to describe this particular variable in

¹ Timothy Wickham-Crowley, *Guerrillas and Revolution in Latin America* (Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press 1992), p. 52.

terms of the role of the middle and upper classes, political parties, and the mass media. This chapter answers the question: is there a situation of dual power in Colombia?

Chapter IV analyzes the state's ability to confront the guerrilla threat. Wickham-Crowley asserts that regime weakness has allowed revolutionary movements to succeed, particularly when guerrillas confront neo-patrimonial states. This chapter discusses certain weaknesses of the Colombian state and the failure to consolidate a viable democracy, with a view to determining whether the guerrillas weight in future prevail this issue is explored in full in the concluding chapter.

In summary, the equilibrium between the actors in the conflict is not structural; it is a circumstance of the effect of narco-trafficking on the society and the failure of the judicial system of the state. The dangerous trend was demonstrated by the eradication protest where the peasants' economic interest were supported by the guerrillas and the narco-traffickers and opposed by the government, driven in part by international pressure. This trend is dangerous, because for the first time it gave the guerrillas significant support by the peasants.

I. INTRODUCTION

A. IMPORTANCE AND DESCRIPTION OF THE THESIS

The purpose of this thesis is to analyze the current violent political conflict in Colombia. The author will use Timothy P. Wickham-Crowley's theory concerning successes or failures of guerrillas and revolution in Latin America. This thesis will argue that an equilibrium has been established in recent years between the guerrillas and the Government. Unless there are conditions that alter this equilibrium in some ways, there can be no solution to this conflict.

The guerrilla groups are strong enough to hold their positions, but not strong enough to topple the government. Even though the government is strong enough to hold the country together and stay in power, it is not militarily strong enough to wipe out or even reduce in a substantial way the guerrilla movements. Thus, there is a typical equilibrium between the actors.

The most important questions that this study addresses are:

- Why hasn't the equilibrium between the Colombian government and the guerrilla groups been broken or changed by events such as the collapse of the Soviet Union and communism?
- Does the equilibrium work to the advantage of either side (or both sides)?
- Has the government a solid national policy or solid strategy to deal with the guerrilla groups?
- Is the government following the right political program to undermine the peasants' support for the guerrillas.
- What has been the effect of narco-trafficking on the growth of the guerrilla groups?
- What are the conditions for the process of the consolidation of democracy in Colombia to unfold?

The importance of this topic bears directly on the current situation in Colombia. The present conflict in Colombia is characterized by two factors: political corruption and the effect of narco-trafficking on Colombian society. These factors do not allow the government to create an effective solution to this complex violent political conflict struggle. In other words, these factors will not allow the government to create a policy that leads to change in the balance among the actors in the struggle.

Colombia's guerrilla conflict is unique in Latin America because narco-trafficking is an ingredient of the unstable political situation. This factor contributes to a weak state. This factor is not present in some other Latin American guerrillas conflicts, including Cuba and Guatemala. However, this phenomena of guerrillas and narco-trafficking has appeared in El Salvador, Perú, and even Nicaragua, but not in the scale of the Colombian example. It appears clear that the guerrilla groups have been able to increase their power because the narco-trafficking has increased the group's financial resources.

The guerrilla groups today are better able to produce chaos and disorder than at any previous time. A social revolution is unlikely but the outcome may well be an unstable society for many years. The political instability of Colombia will be a major obstacle to the development of a fair society and a stronger democracy.

B. LIMITATION OF THIS STUDY

1. The data available is not good enough for an exact analysis of guerrilla financing for two reasons. The first is that this kind of activity is secret and unlikely to leave a record. Managers who cooperate with the government normally disappear or do not want to be identified with the possession of the information. Second, the information is not gathered in a systematic way because it is dangerous to gather in any case.
2. An analysis of the development of the guerrilla groups is difficult because not all the information is publicly available outside those groups. Without the system of information used by the armed forces it would be difficult to achieve any analysis of the actors in this conflict in Colombia. Normally information is only gained when the armed forces capture people and materials.

3. Colombia's conflict has its own unique problems and origins. However, some of the main issues addressed in this study are similar to other Latin American conflicts. By utilizing the comparative approach this study hopes to propose medium and long term solutions for Colombia.
4. Published analysis of the Colombian political conflict has moved back and forth during the last four decades, but this author will not seek to explain all the details of the political history in Colombia or balance the varying views of the conflict.

C. THEORETICAL APPROACH

The theory of Timothy Wickham-Crowley addressing the successes or failures of guerrillas and revolution in Latin America is based on three variables. The approach of this study is to analyze these variables for the case of Colombia to see whether there is an equilibrium between the government and the guerrilla groups, and then to draw some conclusions and formulate recommendations. Each of the variables in the Wickham-Crowley study will be covered in individual chapters.

In the late twentieth century, guerrilla warfare can be characterized:

The true innovations of guerrilla warfare are the transfer of this tactic to internal wars, rather than in external wars against foreign occupiers or colonial powers...In most cases of modern guerrilla warfare, including all those discussed in this work, the insurgency is, or intends to become, a civil war in which the populace will eventually [be forced to?] side either with the guerrilla forces or with the government in power.²

Wickham-Crowley begins his argument with the theoretical debate over the causes of revolutions using the material of well respected scholars, including Eric Wolf, Jeffery Paige, Charles Tilly, and Theda Skocpol.

Skocpol's argument is that internal structural weakness of these overthrown regimes plus international pressures led to their collapse. The primary problem with Skocpol's

² Wickham-Crowley, p. 4.

interpretation is not in her reading of the three cases she uses, but whether these examples enable one to generalize to the case of Latin American countries.

This author will examine three possible causes of revolution as presented by Timothy Wickham-Crowley as a series of questions:

What are the social political conditions underlying peasant support for revolutionaries in the countryside? What elements contribute to militarily strong guerrilla movements or government armed forces? We must also inquire into the historical origins of those weak political regimes in Cuba and Nicaragua, and further discuss why those regimes were likely to elicit a cross-class opposition from civil society, leading eventually to the creation of dual power and an incipient counter-state.³

The crucial and theoretical linkage here is between a peculiarly weak "old regime" and that regime's tendency to press the elements of the opposition toward an alliance, rather than to the better strategy of aggravating the opposition's internal divisions and conflicts.

Wickham-Crowley maintains that when these three features converge in a society, the likely outcome is a social revolution. This study will present each one of the questions above as a variable to adapt the theory to the current situation in Colombia. This will be done in the following way:

The first variable will be the strength and military capacity of the guerrilla groups in terms of organization, strategy, financing system, location, political and military objectives. This will be compared with the military power of the government in terms of internal resources, US assistance, informal pressure, organization and strategic distribution, training, systems and the role of the Armed Forces as a political actor in this conflict.

The second variable, is the peasant support for the guerrilla groups, in terms of open political support. The study will use data from the most recent national elections (1988-1990-1994). This study will also describe regional legacies of political violence,

³ Ibid., p. 9

dimensions of degree of peasant support, the narco-guerrilla and the "cocalero"⁴ support, methods of recruitment, sources of support, and the process of resources committed.

The third variable is the weakness of the state and the emergence of dual power. Wickham-Crowley attempts to describe this particular variable in terms of the role of the middle and upper classes, of the political parties, and the media. The question is whether there is a weak state and the emergence of dual power in Colombia.

D. A BRIEF HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE GUERRILLA MOVEMENTS IN COLOMBIA

This section addresses the origin of the two guerrilla groups, the FARC-EP and the ELN-UC. In this thesis these groups will be denoted as FARC and ELN. It is very important to understand why and when these groups appear in the violent political movement in Colombia.

1. FARC

This group was formed in the second meeting of the Southern Block, by the leaders of the different groups on July 20 1964. The group consists of the former nuclei of militants from the regions called "independent republics" such as Marquetalia, Río Chiquito, and Sumapaz, in the Departments of Tolima and Cundinamarca. The initial members came from peasant origin, many with bandit backgrounds and from the Liberals-Conservative guerrillas. There were also members from urban cadre from the Colombian Communist Party, (PCC). This peasant origin is a common factor in almost all FARC members' backgrounds, especially the top and mid level of the organization leadership since 1960s.

An important stage in the life of this group was the peace negotiations in the middle of the 1980s with the Betancourt government. At the beginning of President Betancourt term the Congress approved Law 35, November 19, 1982 that gave total amnesty to the guerrilla groups at that time. Later the congress approved the law 45 of 1985 to create the legal framework for the peace process with the guerrilla groups. This law was especially

4 The "Cocalero" refers to the peasant who grow and produce cocaine in the south of Colombia.

targeted at the FARC group because it was the largest and oldest movement. As a result of this process the UP (Patriotic Union) appeared as a political party and gained political options and other political power as a third party. When the peace process broke down the FARC doubled its number of people and arms from 1,800 combatants, and 15 fronts, to 4,000 combatants and 32 fronts. From this result an analysis of this group could conclude that its support of the peace negotiations was weak and the real purpose was to reorganize their forces.

Another important stage in the life of the FARC was the creation of a large organization to regroup all the guerrillas in one entity. After the peace negotiation with the Betancourt government the "Cordinadora Guerrillera Simón Bolívar"⁵, (National Guerrilla Organization), CGSM appeared. However, each one of these groups has its own organization and does not believe that there is a real utility and efficiency in a central political and military command. After a military operation called "Operación Colombia" by the Armed Forces in December 1991 against the leaders of these groups in a place known as "Casaverde,"⁶ the leaders had to be dispersed especially in the central and south part of Colombia. Casaverde was the central command of these guerrilla groups for almost 20 years. The leadership of this group has been changed recently with the death of Jacobo Arenas in 1990. Jacobo Arenas was one of the most important ideologists and part of this organization for many years. Although the peasant Manuel Marulanda a.k.a. Sure Shot "TiroFijo" is alive, he was part of the liberal guerrillas. Liberal guerrillas were part of the independent republic of Río Chiquito (south Tolima). Marulanda has led this organization from late 1968 until now. He is close to the age of 70 and has health problems. Therefore, both leadership positions are open for new guerrillas leaders. The political-ideological

5 This organization was created in 1986. In the beginning it created many expectations among the guerrilla groups, because it was another tool to pressure in case of a negotiations or to get support of the guerrilla groups.

6 Casaverde (Green House), was the simile of a government palace in case of the triumph of the revolution. It was located in the piedmont of the eastern plains between La Uribe and Medellín del Ariary, as well as in the middle courses of the Ariary, Guape, and Guejar rivers. The FARC members know that, for example the symbol of the Government in Argentina is the "Casa Rosada," or in United States, the White House.

leader is a former law student, Guillermo León Sáenz a.k.a Alfonso Cano. The military leader is Jorge Briceño Suárez, a.k.a Mono Jojoy. Suarez is the typical example of the hardened combatant. He is the guerrilla leader who has taken the strongest military actions against the armed forces in the last ten years.

The increase of resources in personnel and material had been slow in the early years of the organization, but recently this group has been growing in both resources and personnel. Recently the group has gained influence in some regions and towns. Also according to Bruce Bagley, " The FARC, is the oldest and longest standing guerrilla organization in all of Latin America."⁷ Recently it has become the wealthiest due to the narco-trafficking income.

To explain the reasons for the appearance of this guerrilla group in the earlier 1960s in Colombia it is necessary to understand various processes at that time, among them are the following:

- The problematic judicial situation of the former people of the "independent republics."
- The hatred between liberals and conservatives and the influence of the communist ideology.
- The agrarian problem in Colombia.
- The failure of the peace negotiations after the Rojas government (1958).
- The movement of former liberal guerrillas to colonize other areas of Colombia. These guerrillas had fled from the violence between 1950 and the late 1960s.
- The weak process of consolidation of the democracy with the National Front and the Sitges and Benidorm pact among the elite of the traditional parties on 20 July 1956.
- The Cuban revolution and its effect on the thinking of all the peasants and politics of Colombia.

⁷ Bruce Bagley, William Walker III, *Drug Trafficking in the Americas* (Coral Gables Florida, University of Miami 1994), p. 96.

2 ELN

In July 4, 1964 this group was created by former Colombian scholarship students in Cuba. The initial organizational and ideological bases came from the Worker-Student-Peasant Movement (MOEC). Its leadership has been composed mainly of students and graduates from the Industrial University of Santander.

According to Eduardo Pizarro:

The Brigade Pro National Liberation José A. Galán was created in Havana... On January 7, 1965, the ELN opened fire on the town of Simacota, Santander, and distributed the "Manifiesto of Simacota", to attract national public attention⁸

The ELN has strong ties with Cuba and with "the Cuban road to socialism." The organization gained international notoriety in 1966 when the well educated Roman Catholic priest, Camilo Torres R., died in a confrontation with a patrol of the regular Army. This group was nearly destroyed by the National Army after the "Anorí" operation in mid 1973. The ELN's leaders, Fabio Vásquez Castaño and his brothers, were killed or captured by the Armed Forces. This was the low point of this organization's history. In 1980 the former Spanish priest Manuel Pérez a.k.a Plutarco and a peasant, Nicolás Rodríguez, a.k.a Gabino, became the leaders of this guerrilla group.

This group operates from their territory in the north part of Colombia, mainly in south Santander and northern of Antioquia. The group's defining characteristic is the struggle against petroleum exploitation and the profit made on natural resources by Colombian economic institutions and foreign investors. The ELN is the most radical of the guerrilla groups in Colombia. During the First National Military Conference and the 14th National Plenum, in July, 1995, the ELN changed some of the important aspects of their tactical and strategic plans by launching the National Tactic Plan 1996-1998.

⁸ Eduardo Pizarro, "Revolutionary Guerrilla Groups in Colombia," in *Violence In Colombia*, eds. Charles Bergquist, Ricardo Peñaranda, and Gonzalo Sánchez (Wilmington, Delaware, A Scholarly Resources Inc., 1992), p. 177.

This group is the typical example of the effect of the Cuban revolution in Colombia. They began the construction of a revolutionary movement in the same way as Castro. All the ideology, strategy and tactics come from the ideal revolution, an exported product of Cuba in the sixties.

3. Guerrilla Development 1978-1995

As part of the historical background of the guerrilla groups this section will address their development in numbers of members. The following table presents the evolution and growth of the guerrilla groups during the last four presidential periods.⁹ These data were by the Colombian Governments from 1978 until 1995:

Table 1. Guerrilla Development 1978-1995

Group	1978-1982	1982-1986	1986-1990	1990-1994
Administration	J.C. Turbay	B. Betancourt	V. Barco	C. Gaviria
FARC	1,200 1,800	1,800 4,000	4,000 5,800	5,800 6,800
%	50%	233%	383%	466%
ELN	190 230	230 1,800	1,800 2,600	2,600 3,150
%	21%	847%	1268%	1557%

Why was the growth of the guerrilla groups so great in that period after 1982?

The first factor is the peace process of the Betancourt administration in 1982-1986. In that period the FARC groups grow 233%, the ELN 847%. Before the peace process the ELN was almost destroyed and his leaders jailed. This indicates that the guerrilla groups had not a real intention of making peace with the government. Later the peace process failed, because the government did not ask for a real commitment to the process from the guerrillas.

The second factor that explains the growth of the guerrilla groups is the financing system of both the FARC and the ELN. This political violent conflict began 40 years ago among Colombian political parties. The Cuban revolution of the early sixties led to the creation of communist guerrilla groups. In the early 1980s the guerrilla leaders became aware of a necessity of acquiring other sources of financing. This crisis for most of the

⁹ Jesús La Rotta, *Las Finanzas de la Subversion Colombiana* (Santa fé de Bogotá, Ediciones los Ultimos Patriotas, 1996), p. 61.

Colombian groups pushed their leaders to enter the initial marriage with the narco-traffickers for financing, in return for security and protection of the traffickers. The groups assumed that the narco-trafficking would be a powerful engine for their revolution and therefore began an increase in the growth of the guerrilla groups. In the words of Che Guevara and Regis Debray, from their theory of Foquismo:

The guerrilla foco should create the conditions to revolution and that revolution the engine to impulse itself.¹⁰

One of the most important assumptions is that the narco-trafficking has been the driving engine and the impulse of the guerrilla groups in the late 1980s. This issue of narco-trafficking is one of the factors that has led to a strategic equilibrium in the Colombia political violent conflict.

In the FARC case the period beginning in 1982 was also its marriage with the narco-traffickers and is the initial stage of the process. The FARC provided services to the traffickers, especially in protection. For example, security of areas of growing and laboratories, loading and unloading of small airplanes, and control of domestic runways in the south part of the country were services provided by FARC. Later in 1988-1990 according to Mayor Luis A. Villamarín:

The FARC had been developing interest for the cocaine areas. In 1991 from 48 rural fronts 27 are in areas of coca production. Regularly this guerrilla group has influence in areas of process of cocaine or close to the laboratories of chemical processing.¹¹

In the ELN case, in the period beginning in 1982 it began to extort the oil companies especially the foreign ones. One of the biggest successes of this group was the famous case of Manessman, a German-multinational oil company headed in United States that paid US\$5 million dollars to the ELN for the liberation of two engineers. Later this

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 29.

¹¹ Luis A. Villamarín P., *El Cartel de Las FARC* (Santa fé de Bogotá, Ediciones El Faraon, 1996), p. 85.

form of financing expanded to include all companies, both national and foreign connected with the oil business in Colombia.

The third factor that strengthened the guerrilla groups was the increased use of political violence and the appearance of violence by right wing groups in response to the guerrillas. According to Eduardo Pizarro:

This relative strengthening of the guerrilla movement does not mean in the least that it has historical viability. On the one hand, the guerrilla advance has been accompanied by an unexpected development of paramilitary groups all over the country, which threaten to plunge the country into a generalized "dirty war". Here is a partial list: Muerte a Los Secuestradores (Death to kidnappers), El Escuadron de la Muerte (The Death Squad), Muerte a Abigeos (Death to Rustlers), Alfa 83, Pro Limpieza del Valle del Magdalena (Clean-up of the Magdalena Valley), Los Tiznados (the Soot Faced), Movimiento Anti-Comunista Colombiano (Colombian anti-Communist Movement), Los Grillos (the Crickets), El Escuadron Machete (The Machete Squadron).¹²

E. SUMMARY

This brief historical background of the guerrilla groups and their initial links with the narco-traffickers shows that this study of the equilibrium in Colombia conflict is based on the actions of the three actors in the conflict. It is argued that narco-trafficking is the largest contributor to both the creation of a weak state and the increasing resources of the guerrilla groups. This section presented the three variables of this thesis and the historical origin of both guerrilla groups. The FARC was created from the colonization process of peasant "Independent Republics" and the ELN came from the universities under the patronage of Cuba.

In the guerrilla developments of the last 16 years, the FARC group increased its members by 466%, the ELN group by 1557%. This phenomenon has three explanations, the peace process of the Betancourt government beginning in 1982, the linkage between the narco-traffickers and the guerrillas in the 1980s-1990s, and the right wing paramilitary

¹² Pizarro, "Revolutionary Guerrilla Groups in Colombia," pp. 189-190.

groups' use of violence, which plunged the country into a "dirty war." The following chapters will present a detailed explanation of these three factors and make the argument that the Colombian conflict is in an equilibrium of the balanced forces of a weak state, the narco-traffickers and the guerrilla groups.

II. THE EQUILIBRIUM BETWEEN FORCES

The first variable to be addressed is the strength and military capacity of the guerrilla groups in terms of organization, strategy, financing, location, activities, international aid, and the groups' political and military objectives. The data will be compared with the military power of the government in terms of informal pressures, organization and strategic distribution, internal resources, operations, US assistance, and the role of the Armed Forces as a political actor in this conflict.

Some authors have called this equilibrium a "negative tie"¹³ between the armed forces and the guerrilla groups. On the other hand, in the words of Raymond Aron, the Colombian conflict is:

...an impossible war and at the same time an unlikely peace.¹⁴

The following sections will show the characteristic of the most important actors in this conflict, the armed forces and the guerrilla groups of the FARC and ELN. Other guerrilla groups, for example the dissident group of the former M-19, and the dissident group of the former EPL, do not represent a real threat to the Colombian government. However these groups may at some future point constitute a factor of disorder and chaos. These small dissident guerrilla groups were part of the fragmenting process of the guerrilla movement in the 1980s.

A. GUERRILLA MILITARY STRENGTH:

The following section on the guerrilla military strength will show:

- The general strategy that these groups have been developing in the last years
- The political and military objectives
- Their organization and strategic location

¹³ Eduardo Pizarro, *Insurgencia sin Revolución* (Santa Fé de Bogotá, Tercer Mundo Editores, 1996), p. 231.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 247.

- The sources of financing, and especially how they use narco-trafficking as the fundamental source for financing a revolution
- How they develop their activities to gain local influence in some part of the territory
- Their international influence

1. General Strategy

One of the most important characteristics of both the FARC and ELN, is their general strategy. These strategic goals are the outcome of almost 40 years of armed struggle and the effects of various stages in that long process. At the present time a concrete strategy is to consolidate their local influence. In real terms this means a dual power at the regional and the municipal level. We will see that they have achieved some control, but this control is limited. Both groups propose a change in the Colombian political system without considering the issues of the failure of the Communist system and the breakdown of the Soviet Union. They both pursue a Socialist path for the development for Colombia. However, both groups are at the point of no return, because having spent many years in that cause, they have only achieved a military equilibrium. They require a stronger position to force negotiations like those in El Salvador and Guatemala.

The likelihood of peace through some sort of negotiation is not entirely clear. Often the groups have used this tactic to regroup and build strength before starting a new round of violence and disorder in Colombia. Examples are abundant in the last 14 years of different peace talks with the Colombian government. Nevertheless, the FARC has proposed the creation of a clandestine political party called the "Bolivarian Movement for a new Colombia on the 28th, May 1996."¹⁵ This party's purpose is to create political conditions favorable to FARC in the future.

15 "Manifiesto de Lanzamiento," Montañas de Colombia, FARC, May 28, 1996, pp. 1-6.

At the same time that a short term plan for local control is ongoing, a long term plan to continue and maintain an armed struggle is being implemented. Their overall strategic plan, "Campaña Bolivariana por una nueva Colombia,"¹⁶ has four phases:

1. **First Phase: (1990-1992)** Creation of a new party, training of terrorists overseas, to gain control of the Magdalena middle valley in the center of the country, increase personnel to 18,000 men in arms, and 60 fronts throughout the country. Increase financial sources to US\$56 million of dollars, increase urban guerrillas in Santa Fé de Bogotá, Medellín, Cali.
2. **Second Phase: (1992-1994)** Improvements in foreign relations gains through Cuba and Mexico, to pressure the government in the peace negotiations using such tactics as: Increase personnel to 32,000 men in arms and 80 fronts, increase finance sources to \$200 million of dollars, acquire weapons and communications materials, airplanes, etc.
3. **Third phase: (1996-1998)** Instigation of a general strike, reduction of the economic growth of the nation, terrorism in the cities, creation of a headquarters for a staff of the guerrilla leaders, creation of a popular government, creation of a new constitution and control of the cities by the guerrillas.
4. **Fourth phase: (1998-2000)** The accomplishment of this phase will be according to the development of the first three phases. If the first three phases are not successful the groups will continue the armed struggle until they reach their goals.

At the current time the FARC have achieved some objectives in their original plan including expanded financial resources (more than US\$500million of dollars by this year) and an increase in the number of fronts (73 including the urban fronts). The increased number of the armed followers (32,000) and broadened popular support cannot be achieved in the short term, even during this present government. The development of the Operation Conquer by the Army created a popular turmoil by the peasants against the eradication program. However, even with this success the plan will have to wait for better political and military conditions for further development, especially in the political arena.

¹⁶ This strategic plan "Bolivarian Campaign for a new Colombia" was created on April 10, 1989, in La Uribe(former position of the FARC leaders until 1990 when the Colombian Army operation destroyed that

The ELN is working to apply international human rights laws and standards in the conflict with the purpose of achieving political and international support of the guerrilla movement. At the same time ELN has rejected moves towards a peace process or peace talks because it considers the current government to be illegitimate and because of the influence of drug money in the last campaign. This group plans to show an image of the revolutionary fighting for peace and democracy, and to create socialism in Latin America. ELN is attempting to legitimize the Marxist-Leninist philosophy with a real example in a new nationalist movement in Colombia.

The group's defining characteristic is the struggle against petroleum exploitation and the profit made from the natural resource by Colombian economic institutions and foreign investors. The ELN is the most radical of the guerrilla groups in Colombia. During the First National Military Conference and the 14th National Plenum, in July, 1995, the ELN changed some of the important aspects of their tactical and strategic plans by launching the National Tactical Plan, 1996-1998.

They changed the concept of the "five front war" to "seven national strategic areas."

- Area One is "Darío de Jesús Ramírez in the northeast of Antioquia
- Area Two is ABC (Arauca, Boyacá, Casanare)
- Area Three is the middle Magdalena River
- Area Four is Mares Province
- Area Five is the suburbs of Bucamanga
- Area Six is the frontier area (Venezuela)
- Area Seven is the Coffee area (Caldas, Quindío, Risaralda)

position). This plan was designed by the FARC's VIII Conference in 1982.

2. Political and Military Objectives

The following section will consider the goals of both organizations. These goals were publicly announced at the last plenum or conference that each group had in the last two years. Some of the objectives presented are only a tactic to be developed. The group's tactical objectives placed in the big picture show the group's strategy.

a. *F.A.R.C. (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia)*

The following are the publicly announced political and military objectives of FARC. For this information this study uses two different sources, a FARC communiqué¹⁷ and information from the Army Intelligence Agency:¹⁸

1. To develop the "strategic plan" called the Bolivarian Campaign for a new Colombia. The name of the strategic plan is very close to the name of the new political party that they are creating. For this purpose they will try to increase the number of fronts¹⁹ to 80, each one with 400 men in arms, to total 32,000 men. They will be assigned to two major strategic tasks, the first one with 16,000 men is a mobile guerrillas unit assigned to the strategic center of struggle, and the second is 16,000 men formed into a mobile guerrilla unit assigned to make war throughout the country.
2. Acquisition of weapons and explosives especially from Perú, Ecuador, El Salvador, Venezuela and Central America.
3. To increase the activities to prevent the eradication program for illicit drug products. To Influence the development of strikes and popular protest against the government and US influence. If possible, to take control of the peasants and lead them in a popular uprising against the government.
4. To create a new clandestine party called "Bolivarian Movement for a New Colombia, " in order to acquire political support as a pretext to seize power in close coordination with the PCC, and UP (Patriotic Union).

17 "Manifiesto Octava Conferencia de Las FARC-EP," La Uribe, FARC, April 2, 1993, pp. 1-5.

18 Ejército Nacional, "Planes y Proyecciones Grupos Subversivos, Dirección de Inteligencia Ejercito," Santa Fé de Bogotá June, 1996.

19 The term "Front" means a guerrilla military organization with approximately 50- to 100 members in arms that develops operations in a given zone. It is a territorial unit.

5. To move the rural conflict to the urban areas. Because this is the last stage of insurrection, they plan to increase the logistic support from the big cities, using the Bolivarian militias or urban fronts as an example.
6. To begin the actions in order to bring about the First National Offensive by the end of 1996. The plan is to execute attacks on multiple military targets and create disorder and chaos to measure the level of compromise of the people .
7. To insist on international mediation of this conflict and the defense of the Human rights.

b. E.L.N. (*National Liberation Army*)

This information is from an analysis of the most recent national conference (III Congress Heroes and Martyrs for a new Colombia, 10-20 October 1993 ²⁰ and I National Military Conference "Manuel Vásquez Castaño" July 1995). ²¹ In the III Congress "Edgar Amilkar Grimaldo", in July 1996, these two groups developed their military and political objectives:

1. To change of the concept of the five front war to seven national strategic areas.
2. To create the FMA (Area Military Force) and the EMA (Area Staff Headquarters) with the purpose of organizing the military force in a structure like regular infantry battalions in the period 1996-98.
3. To implement the Code of War (Código de Guerra) in order to gain influence with the international agencies for human rights.
4. To create the BRMs (Mass Revolutionary Bases) in both the rural and urban areas for support of militias in Bogotá, Medellín, Cali, Bucaramanga.
5. To increase the attacks on pipelines to interfere with the oil policy of the government and private foreign investment in the oil business.
6. To increase contacts with the National Conciliatory Commission (CCN).

²⁰ "I Conferencia Nacional Militar," ELN, July 1995, pp. 1-54.

²¹ "18 Preguntas al Cura Perez o 'Poliarco,'" *El Tiempo*, Sep. 1, 1996, from Internet.

7. To develop a plan to infiltrate the armed forces with the two goal of assassinating military leaders and, creating an active counterintelligence network.
8. To create a military school to educate the leaders and commanders of the guerrillas units.

3. Organization and Strategic Location

This section presents the current configuration of the two primary groups of guerrillas. This section will answer the following questions:

- What is the nature of both military organizations in the different level of coordination and chain of command?
- What is the number of members in each group?
- Where are the groups located?

This section will address the numbers of members by front in each of the different regions where groups have developed activities. There is also a comparative analysis with other guerrilla groups in Latin America to see the relationship of these groups with the Colombian groups. It is not possible to include both guerrillas groups as one guerrilla movement because their differences do not permit a common analysis.

After the peace process of the Betancourt government in 1986, the guerrilla leaders of the FARC, ELN, M-19, and EPL, agreed to create the "Coordinadora Guerrillera Simón Bolívar (CGSM)."²² This would be a large organization and require cooperation between the groups. The new organization would impact both the prospects for revolution and the stabilization of the country. But the required coordination of these movements was almost impossible to achieve for a variety of reasons. The first one was the peace process of M-19, EPL, Quintín Lame, in 1991. The second reason was, their difference in goals, in financing, recruitment, policies for peace in recent years. The third one was the intellectual outlooks of

²² This organization was created with the purpose of coordinating and centralizing the revolutionary effort. The members of this were FARC, ELN, M-19, EPL, and Quintín Lame groups.

the leaders between the FARC, M-19, and ELN. These are some of the reasons that do not permit a full cooperation between groups. It is therefore unlikely to take place among guerrillas groups at least in the short term. Even so it is important to consider the future role of the CGSM in a peace negotiations process, because it will be a factor in any peace talks.

a. FARC

An explanation of the organization and location of the FARC group in Colombia can be given in the following way: The FARC group is a rural guerrilla organization, and it has a national secretariat. The group is integrated through the seven members who are at the same time commanders of the different blocks. Before the "Colombia operation" in December 1990 its national secretariat was localized in a single place. Now as a result of that experience it is a mobile command (CM). The central general staff is made up of 25 members; the same seven commanders plus 18 more commanders who are responsible for logistics, finances, administration, and the inspection committee organization. There are six blocks of war, each one consisting of an estimated 600-1000 men with arms.²³ The Central Commander is responsible for the security, finances, and communication of the national secretariat. This unit consists of an estimated 380-400 men with arms. There are 61 fronts each one consisting of 50-100 men with arms. Those fronts form the blocks, each front has three committees responsible for financing, political intimidation, and intelligence. Normally the financing is from the block. The block is based in the cities or towns so that it may manage the funds or resources in permanent contact with the fronts. There are sixteen mobile companies attached to a block. Those companies are the first stage in becoming a front. This happens when the unit reaches the full complement of people and arms needed to developed activities. Normally two or three companies make up one front, each company has an estimated 20-30 men with arms.

²³ Men in arms means combatant guerrilla member either men or women. Each one has normally a rifle and basic equipment, and some military training as guerrilla.

The smallest unit of this organization is the guerrilla or commission. It is a unit of 10-15 intended for special assignments. Its organization is the basic military form well known in history. The most conservative estimate of the number of armed members is approximately 6,000 men and women. The following graphic shows the actual structure of the FARC group.

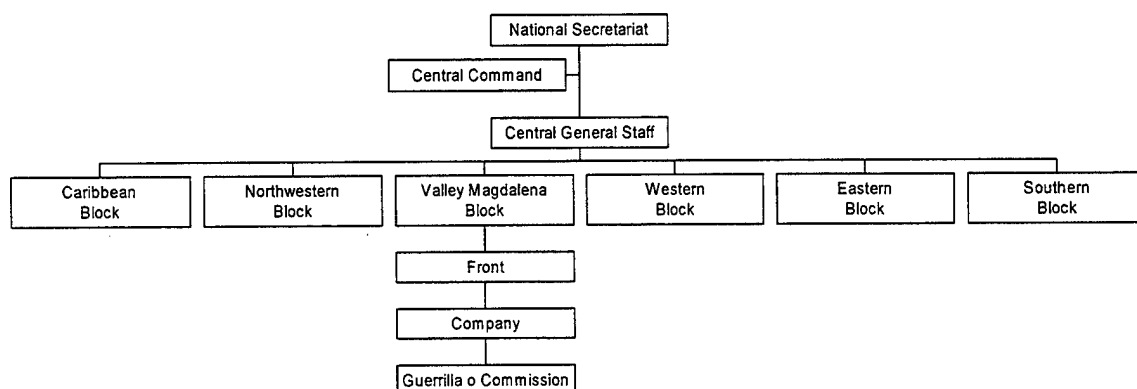


Figure 1. FARC Organization

This guerrilla group has either influence or a presence in 25 of 33 Departments and in approximately 400 towns.²⁴ Other sources indicate that about 225²⁵ municipalities or towns have some level of influence from the FARC.

The difference in information from each source is due to the way each source manages the information. Newspapers have the purpose of reporting news, but the National Police information is based on intelligence or a defector. The FARC presence and influence of this group is in the central part of the country, along the East Cordillera and the valley of Cauca and Magdalena River. There is also some influence in the department of Caquetá, Huila, Meta, and Casanare, Cundinamarca, Santander, Cauca, and Antioquia. The FARC have the largest number of guerrilla positions with the purpose of controlling the heart of the country and holding a strategic position that will split the country in two well defined areas, the flat land and the mountains.

²⁴ Plinio Apuleyo Mendoza, "Bajo Chantaje," *Semana*, August 19-25, 1996, from Internet

²⁵ National Police, *Revista de Criminalidad 1994* (Santa Fé de Bogotá, Imprenta Fondo Rotatorio de la Policía, 1995), p.149.

The organization and positions that appear in Table 2 come from both government sources²⁶ and guerrilla documents. This table shows the level, structure, and

Table 2. FARC Organization and Location

Organization	Member	Location	Front
National Secretariat	7	N. Caquetá, S Tolima	17-21-25-50
	380	E, Caqueta, S, Guaviare, Urabá, Middle Magdalena	Cp North
National Head Quarters	25	Around Country	
Blocks			
19-35-37 41-59-	550	Guajira, Magdalena, Atlantico, Sucre, Cesar, N Bolivar,	
	50		FU Jose Antequera
Northwestern Block	600	Antioquia, N Chocó, Córdoba	5-9-18-34
		Part of Risaralda, Caldas	36-47-57-58
	45		FU JMC
Middle Magdalena Block	600	Santander, S Bolivar, S Cesar	04-11-12-20
		E Antioquia, W Boyacá.	23-24-33-46
Western Block	450	Valle, Cauca, Nariño, Caldas	06-08-29-30
	50	Tolima, Risaralda, S Chocó	FU.M.Cepeda
	40		CP.A. Cortes
Eastern Block	1,200	Meta, Cundinamarca, Arauca	1-7-16-22
		Casanare, Vichada, Guainía	26-27-28
		Guaviare, Vaupés, E Boyacá	31-38-39
			40-42-43-
			44-45-51-
			52-53-54
			55-56-MB
	150		PS-JA-EM
	100		MSP-JJR
	50		Mixta-JB
Southern Block	829	Huila, Caquetá, Putumayo	2-3-13-14
		South East Cauca	15-32-48
			49-60-61
	40		T.Forero
	50		C.Torres
	40		R. Lozada, "COPAV"
Central Command	389	Tolima, Quindío, Valle	17-21-25-50
	40		Cp.Norte
	40		Cp Joselo
TOTAL	5,685	Combatants	

²⁶ Ejército Nacional, "Planes y Proyecciones Grupos Subversivos, Dirección de Inteligencia Ejercito," Santa Fé de Bogotá.

membership assigned to each block. This is the latest data available with their location or influence area (See Appendix for map, Figure 6), and the name of the unit.

From Table 2 and the FARC organization and location; it can be assumed that the model of organization presented brings three methods for the development of orders, plans, or politics in the accomplishment of FARC objectives.

The first method is through the regular chain of command. In this particular case by radio, letters, messages, or the use of codified mail to transmit the instructions.

The second method is according to the concept that María José Moyano established in the Argentine example, and applied in the Colombian case would be:

...the cellular structure according to the principle of compartmentalization, where an individual only knows the identity of the members of his or her own cell, and that of a member of another cell who acts as nexus.²⁷

The third method is "the wave of circumstances" or individual decisions of a local leader. This leader is assumed to make decisions in support of the general objectives of the organization. This concept is the "wave system" and is a policy of deep decentralization at each one of the levels of this organization. At the development of a front this policy is useful to create a level of initiative. In the long term, however, the policy may create a dangerous and out of control unit because of the natural response of local leaders. Indeed with the narco-trafficking as a principal source of financing, this policy increases the level of illegitimate conduct.

Another important consideration is the topography and geography of Colombia. Geographical factors do not make it easy to control some regions. Mountainous regions and jungles far from the urban centers also effect issues of the location of the armed forces in country.

²⁷ María José Moyano, *Argentina's Lost Patrol* (New Haven, Yale University Press 1995), p. 139.

b. ELN

This organization was initially created as another “Guerrilla Foco,” and in 1973 was changed to the urban guerrilla. At this time the ELN is a combination of both rural and urban guerrilla structures and organizations, with its strongest influence in the large cities of Colombia; Bucaramanga, Medellín and Santa Fé de Bogotá.

This group maintains its forces in the areas where natural resources are exploited by foreign and national companies, particularly the areas of oil, gold, gas, and coal in the central and north part of the country. The ELN has a national direction by two commanders, the ideological and the military leader. The ELN has five war fronts supported by 300-1000 men in arms. The ELN also has seven C.R.A. (command regional area). These areas have some common features and social-economical conditions. The ELN urban and rural front are established for the purpose of coordinating their political, military, and financial activities. Each C.R.A. has three to five rural cuadrillas.²⁸

The ELN resource are 34 cuadrillas, each with 50-100 men in arms, four mobile companies, with 30-70 men in arms, normally with attached explosives experts, and twelve urban fronts for military training. Units have weapons and expertise available to accomplish terrorist acts in the cities. Information on the ELN structural and organization is shown in Figure 2.

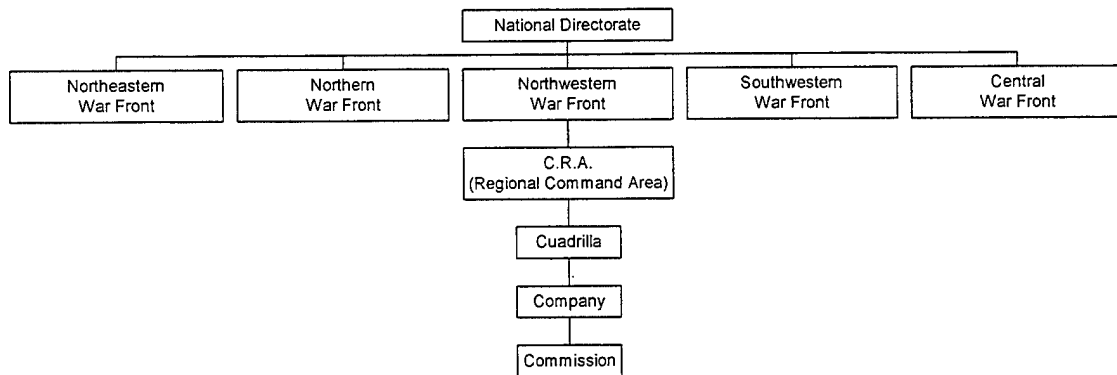


Figure 2. ELN Organization

²⁸ The name of front in the ELN is cuadrilla, normally formed by 50-100 men in arms.

The most conservative figures indicate that the ELN has approximately 3,404 combatants. The group's influence has grown in the last six years from 18 towns in 1989 to 44 towns or regions in 1996. The departments of Bolívar, Cesar, Boyacá, Chocó, Cauca, Arauca, Antioquia, and North and South Santander are regions under ELN influence. Later in Chapter three we will explain the concept of guerrilla influence.

Table 3 shows the ELN organization and distribution and the special characteristics of the organization, the different levels of the structure, the number of members at each level, their location (See Appendix for map, Figure 7), and the name of the units.

Table 3. ELN Organization and Distribution

Organization	Membership	Location	Cuadrillas
Northern War Front	810	Guajira, Cesar, N Santander	14-12-16
		Bolívar, Sucre, Atlántico, Cesar	26-34-19
		Magdalena, Córdoba, Urabá.	24-04-33
			FU 05-08
			Cp S. Bolivrqr
Northeastern War Front	1,019	Santander S&N, Arauca,	07-02-18
		Cesar, Antioquia, Bolívar	17-08-03
		N Casanare, N Boyacá, Cesar	09-28 Cp.Comunen Cp.Simacota F.U03-10.
Northwestern War Front	800	Antioquia, Chocó, Urabá	10-01-30-32
		Risaralda, S Bolívar	20-21-41-13
			31-23-
			Cp.Anorí,
			FU 02
Southwestern War Front	510	Huila, Tolima, Valle, Quindío	06-15-05-27
		Risaralda, Nariño	FU 07-09-06-11
Central War front	265	Cundinamarca, N Tolima,	25-29
		W Casanare, NE Boyacá	FU 01
TOTAL	3,404	Combatants	

From Table 3, it can be assumed that this organizational model allows for three ways of communication and development, and to implement orders, plans, or politics and accomplish ELN objectives.

The first method of communication is the normal chain of command of the organization. In this particular case by using radio and mail. One of the most important

characteristics of this guerrilla group is that the organization is commanded by two leaders. Normally the decisions of the ELN come from these internal authorities. The second one is the cellular structure described earlier.

In the case of the ELN the compartmentalization is more important than in the FARC because they have some urban fronts where this cellular structure works better to avoid infiltration and destruction of those groups by the government.

The third method is different from that of the FARC organization because the control of the ELN organization is very tight. The decentralization of each of the levels of this organization is less likely than in the FARC.

It is important to consider the sources of financing of the ELN. The ELN is well controlled and very centralized. This works to its advantage in extortion of foreign companies or in the planning and realization of attacks on pipelines, and the kidnapping of personnel from companies that do not pay that extortion. Coordination is made possible by the organization of the C.R.A, the rural, and the urban fronts with centralized national direction.

c. Other Groups in Latin America

This section will present for comparison a brief analysis of other guerrilla groups in Latin America over the last four decades. Some of these groups are now inactive or have moved to the political arena. Some are at the peak of their political moment and will provide a spectrum to measure the level of development of the guerrilla groups in Colombia. The easiest way to measure these guerrilla groups is the level of membership in their movements. The first group addressed will be the Cuba guerrillas according to Timothy Wickham-Crowley:

The 26th of July movement (M-26), as it was known, spread and grew to several hundred rural fighters plus other urban supporters by early 1958²⁹

²⁹ Wickham-Crowley, p. 16.

The M-26 July had less than 1,000 men when Castro took power in that small country. Another important actor was the Sandinista guerrilla group that in 1979 took power as a second successful example of a guerrilla revolution in Latin America. In the case of El Salvador the FMLN had more than ten thousand members before the peace negotiations opened. In Guatemala the URGV has perhaps six thousand members. The Peruvian movement, Sendero Luminoso, had between three to five thousand members before the capture of its commander Gonzalo. In the case of Venezuela, the FALN may have reached between 1,000 and 2,000 guerrilla members. In 1975 in Argentina according to María José Moyano:

The Montonero movement had a total of 3,500 members and the ERP an estimated 1,500 members³⁰

After examining the guerrilla movements in different countries of Latin America, each one of these movements in particular stages of their armed struggle, Colombia's guerrilla movement is not only the oldest but is also the largest in comparison to other countries and presents the most difficult problem to solve. The size of the Colombia groups must be of some concern, because in the other examples political problems were solved with different outcomes over a period of ten to twenty years. However, problems remain in Colombia after 40 years and there is no light at the end of the tunnel.

4. Financing a Revolution or Maintaining the Status Quo?

In order to answer this controversial question, it is necessary first to note that some people believe the guerrillas do not have relations with the narco-traffickers and others think, that the linkage is clear and has permitted the groups to increase their power. Some consider that the narco-trafficking is in fact the only reason that the groups are able to maintain the armed struggle in Colombia. An analysis of the financing system and its sources of income for both FARC and ELN is necessary.³¹

³⁰ Moyano, p. 104.

³¹ La Rotta, p. 95.

External aid is an unnecessary consideration, because, at this time with the breakdown of the former Soviet Union external financing does not take place. All sources are internal and the result of internal variables with different origins. According to the *International Herald Tribune*:

The insurgency has not only survived the fall of communism but has actually prospered-the rebels are now more numerous and more powerful.³²

The evolution of the financing system of the guerrillas has changed through time and is a complex structure that is an integral part of the economic market of Colombia. In May 1996, the *Economist* accurately summarized the Colombian guerrillas financing and growth:

The guerrillas seem to be getting more numerous, richer, better armed and more widespread. Current estimates put the number of armed men at more than 10,000. They are to be found in 450 municipalities, more than half the total guerrillas in the entire country. They have shown little inclination of late to negotiate. ... and the incentive not to talk is large: Millions of dollars flow into the rebels in ransom payments for kidnap victims and narco- trafficking activities.³³

The following section will address the different sources of financing, with kidnapping, and narco-trafficking proving the link with both business in Colombia and narco-guerrilla. A summary of the guerrilla financing system with its different sources of national and international funds will be used to prove that the Colombian guerrilla groups have extensive resources for maintaining their armed struggle. Their primary task to obtain these resources is not only to challenge the current government and the civil society, but is also necessary in order for the guerrillas to accomplish their long term political and military objectives of seizing power and changing the political system.

32 Gabriel Escobar, "Colombia Insurrection Becomes a Civil War," *International Herald Tribune*, November 2, 1996, p. 2.

33 "Colombian's Guerrillas Flourish as its President Fades," *The Economist*, May 7-11 1996, p. 37.

a. Extortion

This kind of crime was a traditional source of financing in the sixties. However, lately it has become a more sophisticated and specialized method designed for a specific victim. This type of extortion is generalized throughout Colombia. Later in this section a table will present the scope and influence of extortion and the derived income by each group. Both guerrilla groups work using essentially the same system. This crime is against business people in all categories. These people do not inform the police or the authorities in most of the cases because they fear the consequences. It is very important to differentiate the types of extortion because of the way the Colombian judicial system and the authorities identify the crime. Extortion is split into various crimes, but is made up of the extortion of cattlemen, mineral resources such as oil, gold, coal, etc. and other illegal activities, for example, maintaining transportation check points and threats of cattle stealing.

In the case of extortion of cattlemen, this method exists throughout Colombia, but is usually found in areas where the main income is based on herding. Colombia was a former cattle exporter but today people avoid investing in a business where the profit will be going to the guerrilla groups. Sometimes this sounds like a joke, but in some regions the guerrillas kidnap cows and extort money for their return. Another technique is to ask for money every month using letters or dead notes, they call "boleto" or "Vacuna."³⁴ The amount of money that the groups receive from this crime according to Jesús La Rotta is "321,000,000 dollars per year."³⁵

In the case of check points and hijacking, the long routes of the commercial sectors of Colombia are difficult for the police to control and are subject to these crimes in regions outside of the control of the police. Groups of ten to fifteen men block the highway, looking for military people, and collecting money from the tourists. Owners of cars and sometimes the large companies must pay to pass the checkpoint. If they refuse their vehicle

³⁴ The "Boleto" means a bill to support the revolution, The "vacuna " means the shooting to support the revolution.

³⁵ La Rotta, p. 101.

is burned or the driver is murdered. The number of cases reported for this crime is more than 2,780 per year. However, the amount of money generated by this method is very difficult to calculate. The source for this information is news on radio, TV, or in the newspaper. Because this crime is part of Colombian life outside of the big cities, control by the government is almost impossible. Some authors put the estimate of total income from check points and hijacking at US\$ 133 million per year.³⁶

b. *Extortion in the Resources Sectors*

This crime is the consequence of a new generation of guerrilla leaders who have implemented an efficient financial system that has led to the growth of the groups. This section will address the different kinds of extortion related to natural resources like oil, gold, and coal. Guerrilla groups, especially the ELN, and to a lesser extent the FARC, have used this method. This kind of extortion is directed at nationals and foreign companies or multinational organizations, and is a specialty of the ELN. The following is a summary of this particular extortion operation:

(1) Oil. This financing source is the most productive, especially for the ELN. They target large companies that have signed agreements for the purpose of stopping the kidnapping of employees, especially foreign, and to avoid the attacks on the property. The ELN may threaten kidnappings or pipeline explosions unless they are paid off in advance, or blow up the pipelines and then collect money from the companies hired to repair the damage. According to *Bloomberg Business News*:

The rebels blew up the pipeline 229 times over a five-year period, spilling 683,214 barrels of oil. The oil industry, both the private and state owned, was also affected by the guerrilla attacks. State oil company Ecopetrol lost US\$514 million over the period, while private oil companies lost US\$395 million.³⁷

³⁶ Ibid., pp. 104-105.

³⁷ David Scanlan, "Colombian rebels Cost Nation \$12,5 Billion since 1990," *Bloomberg Business News*, Latino links Enterprises, Inc., 1996, from Internet.

Another source *EL Tiempo* (the most important newspaper in Colombia) in a study over a ten-year period found:

The ELN blew up the pipeline (this pipeline is 1250 miles, the longest in the country) 417 times, spilling 1,413 billion of barrels, the oil industry has lost US\$40,175 million.³⁸

Furthermore, The New York Times estimates that:

...the guerrillas collected US\$140 million a year from the oil companies.....nevertheless, oil company officials acknowledge that guerrillas may have infiltrated the worker's unions and control many local politician...they suspect that the guerrillas extort money from the subcontractors.³⁹

(2) Mining. The mining sectors for both gold and coal have problems with the guerrilla groups, especially in the departments of Antioquia, Cauca, Chocó, and Guanía. Companies such as Mineros de Antioquia and Coldragados have made statements on this situation and according to the weekly magazine *Cambio 16*:

..they paid US\$10 million a month. Otherwise the guerrillas would for example in the town El Bagre Antioquia, blow up company installations and kidnap or kill people.⁴⁰

In the case of coal in the department of Cesar for example the large companies, Guajira, Boyacá, and Cundinamarca, the extortion figure is US\$130 million.

c. Kidnapping

This is the most common crime committed by the guerrilla groups, but is a specialty of ELN. According to the Colombian weekly magazine *Semana* (The most important newsmagazine in Colombia):

During the last 20 years in Colombia there have been 10,442 kidnappings...the average ransom is US\$250,000 dollars, and for a foreign kidnapping the ransom would be on the average US\$4 million. The guerrilla

38 "Voladuras dejan Perdidas por \$78,700 million," *El Tiempo*, Santa Fé de Bogotá, July 5 1996, from Internet.

39 Diana Jean Schemo, "Oil Companies Buy an Army to Tame Colombia's Rebels," *New York Times*, August 22, 1996, p. A7.

40 "La guerrilla Millonaria," *Cambio 16*, July 17, 1995, Santa Fé de Bogotá, p. 48.

groups at this time have 3,000 men available to do kidnappings in Colombia⁴¹

The following table on kidnappings in 1995 in Colombia includes the number of kidnappings, the ransom in millions of dollars, which people were victims, foreign or nationals, the source of the information, and the percentage that is attributed to the guerrilla groups.

It is estimated that only 10% of cases are reported to the authorities. For this reason establishing a pattern for calculating the number of people kidnapped and the profit for each guerrilla group, is almost impossible. However, using figures from different sources gives the results in Table 4 and also generates an estimate of the income from kidnapping.

Using Table 4, guerrilla income by kidnapping during 1995, the number of cases varied from 1060 to 2965. The annual income from Kidnappings varied from US\$659 million to US\$150 million. Some kidnappings are of nationals and some are of foreigners. The last column in the table shows the different percentages that each source gives. The most conservatives figures are given by the Colombian National Police. For the purpose of using an estimate of the kidnapping source of financing by the guerrilla groups,

According to the Colombian National Police:

...taking the 43% of the 1293 cases of kidnapping throughout Colombia, that are attributed to the guerrillas, the FARC committed 261 cases, the ELN 270, the dissident group EPL 27 and the dissident group M-19, committed a total of 564 kidnappings in a single year, 1995.⁴²

41 "El Cartel del Secuestro," *Semana*, August 13-17, 1996, Santa Fé de Bogotá, from Internet.

42 Ibid., p. 141.

Table 4. 1995-Kidnapping

Total Number of Kidnappings	Annual income in Dollars	Foreign	National	Source	% of Kidnapping Attribute to Guerrilla
2965 Cases	\$659,5M	*	*	LaRotta ⁴³	70%
1,158 Cases	\$530,0M	45	1113	Semana ⁴⁴	90%
1,060 Cases	\$581,0M	45	1015	ElTiempo ⁴⁵	
1,400 Cases	\$150,0M	35	1365	NYT ⁴⁶	96%
2,300 Cases	\$329,0M	*	*	Lat.Link ⁴⁷	
1,293 Cases	*	*	*	National Pol ⁴⁸	43%

* information unavailable

d. Budget Deviation

This method was created as a consequence of the political reform in 1986 and the popular elections of mayors and councils in small towns or municipalities. At that time it became possible to control local elections through intimidation; newly elected candidates must follow a political program that satisfies a local guerrilla leader's wishes. Of course, the budget is diverted to the guerrilla groups' financing system. An example of this situation is the Nariño Department, where the 29th FARC front:

...this front got almost US\$2.0 millions of dollars from the 40 municipalities of Nariño Department. However a figure for the entire country is about US\$60 million⁴⁹

Another example of this situation is Arauca Department, where the money that came from the oil bonus for exploitation is invested according to the instructions of the ELN. The amount of money in that particular situation is significant. These cases are an example of what guerrilla groups call local influence, or the people's power to participate in the local decisions. This builds political support for the guerrillas.

⁴³ La Rotta, p. 185.

⁴⁴ "El Cartel del Secuestro," *Semana*.

⁴⁵ "El Secuestro en Cifras," *El Tiempo*, March 20, 1996, Santa Fé de Bogotá, from Internet

⁴⁶ Steven Ambrus, "Colombian Aims to Ransom Nation From Kidnapers' Grip," *New York Times*, Nov 10, 1995.

⁴⁷ Scanlan, from Internet.

⁴⁸ National Police, *Revista de Criminalidad 1994*, p. 92.

⁴⁹ La Rotta, p. 191.

The list of mayors of different municipalities that have been kidnapped or killed is growing in length every day. The mayors must pay with the municipal budget for protection of themselves or their families. According to *World Press Review*:

...of the 1,100 mayors elected in 1992 throughout the country, 17 had been killed, according to the National Federation of Municipalities, and another 225 say they have been threatened by guerrillas.⁵⁰

A short explanation of how public money finds its way to the guerrillas is found when the original destination is people hired to work in a position that does not exist or approval of contracts to do public works with people recommended by the guerrillas. Later the project is not finished and the responsible people disappear. Sometimes the personal security of some mayors is provided by the guerrillas in order to maintain the mayors under their control. If the guerrilla loses control of the mayor, then the mayor is killed or possibly some member of his family. Another way to implement local control is by changing a local decision in favor of someone, thereby creating confidence and gaining political support for the guerrillas.

f. Narco-trafficking

In the early 1980s the guerrilla leaders became aware of the necessity for other sources of financing. Because the guerrilla foco has been almost eliminated and the political circumstances in Colombia do not lead a revolution as the case of Cuba and Nicaragua. Even the traditional political parties and the government push the repression against the subversive groups. This crisis pushed the Colombian groups into the initial marriage with the narco-traffickers. The groups provided security and protection. They assumed that the narco-trafficking would become the engine of their revolution and the political protest that they thought before to seize the power and change the political system. The rapid growth of the guerrilla groups began at this time.

⁵⁰ Isabel Vincent, "Colombia's Oil Backfires," *The Globe and Mail of Toronto*, from *World Press Review*, December 1994. From Lexis-Nexis Electronic Service.

The ELN group's principal financial activities are kidnapping, the extortion and taxing of companies that exploit the natural resources, gold, coal, oil, gas, with the narco-trafficking activities playing a minor role. The FARC group receives their principal financing from the activities of narco-trafficking and cocaine production.

This is a controversial subject because the linkage between the narco-trafficking and the guerrillas has become almost a myth. But recently Colombians have seen a strong relationship between guerrillas and the drug groups. In some US government agencies, people have begun to change their analysis, and over the last few months have changed from the link which was improbable to the definition of a desk officer in the Pentagon:

they participated in the process of producing illicit drugs in different stages, therefore the link is clear.⁵¹

General Barry McCaffrey said in March 8, 1995:

Drug production and trafficking continue to be the major regional problem which affects all the nations of the Latin America. In Colombia, for example, the murder rate is nearly ten times than of the United States, most of these deaths are directly related to narco-guerrilla activity. Cultivation of coca in Colombia has increased by more than 20% in the past two year⁵²

Later in November 2, 1996 the anti-drug czar refers to the guerrilla groups as:

Colombia's 10,000 guerrilla drug traffickers⁵³

The first document of FARC which mentions this subject openly came to light in 1982, according to the Colombian Armed Forces:

This document was elaborated during the Seventh National guerrilla conference and it contains the guiding principles assumed by the fronts about the drug issue. The fronts are ordered to preserve the balance between the production of cocaine and the family consumption crops and carry out a

51 Interview with Allison Major, Office of the Secretary of Defense, Drug Enforcement Policy and Support, 30 September 1996, Pentagon, Washington, D.C.

52 Barry MacCaffrey, "Prepared Statement Before the House National Security Committee," *Defense Issues*, March 08, 1995 vol. 10, No. 50, p. 3.

53 Escobar, p. 2.

special indoctrination work among cocaine-leaf raisers to have them on the side of the guerrilla groups⁵⁴

It is important to consider figures that show the dimension of narco-business for the guerrilla groups. Later this study will address how the guerrillas obtain money to sustain their armed struggle based on this concept of narco-guerrilla. This will be presented in Chapter III along with the guerrillas influence and peasant support.

The following table presents the annual income of the guerrilla groups from narco-trafficking activities as compared to money, weapons, and strength of the guerrilla groups in millions of dollars. The evidence presented confirms the linkage of some of the guerrillas to production and other services provided to this illicit business such as: protection, growing, processing, check points and chemical precursors. Before presenting the table this study will consider an example according to the Colombian Army:

If we take the figures computed for the fifteenth front in the southern part of Colombia, which had two financial commissions the Caguan commissions and the 15th commission, that is, multiplying by two the amount of money received by each commission, we obtain a rough figure of US\$10,500,000 per front which is the money received from cocaine production alone. This does not include the money received as payments for kidnapping, or other crimes described before. Altogether, the block income sums up the total of US\$73,500,000 then the FARC reaches a great total of approximately US\$514,000,000.⁵⁵

From sources used for the following table it is difficult to estimate. These sources do not show the amount of money for each group. However, this author estimates that the money is divided, 85% for FARC, and 15% to ELN.

⁵⁴ Ejército Nacional, *Grupos Narco-Terroristas Cartel de las FARC*, unpublished, August 10, 1996, p. 6, Information presented to the U.S. House of Representatives, Washington, D.C.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 17.

In Table 5 the annual income of narco-trafficking activities for both guerrilla groups shows that this is a real phenomenon.

Table 5. Narco-trafficking Financing Going to Guerrilla Groups

Annual Income (1995)	Group	Source
US\$ 701,0 M	CGSM	Lat.link ⁵⁶
US\$ 718,0 M	CGSM	<i>El Tiempo</i> ⁵⁷
US\$ 175,2 M	CGSM	<i>Washington Post</i> ⁵⁸
US\$1115,0 M	CGSM*	La Rotta ⁵⁹

Table 6 is a summary of different sources of finances for the guerrilla organizations. The average amount in each case assigns 85% to the FARC and 15% to the ELN in the cases of narco-trafficking. In the case of kidnapping, 43% of all the kidnapping (guerrilla related) in the country during 1994 was assigned 45% to FARC and 55% to ELN. In the case of mining, gold and oil, all was assigned to the ELN, and 50% to each group was assigned for the extortion of cattlemen, checkpoints, and budget divergence.

Table 6. Summary Guerrilla Financing System

Organization		FARC	ELN
Extortion			
	Billeting to Cattleman	US\$ 156M	US\$ 155M
	Check-point	US\$ 66M	US\$ 67M
	Piracy		
Natural Res. Extortion			
	Oil		US\$ 140M
	Gold		US\$ 130M
Kidnapping		US\$ 87M	US\$ 106M
	Nationals		
	Foreign		
Budget Deviation		US\$ 51M	US\$ 9M
Narco-trafficking		US\$ 575M	US\$ 102M
TOTAL		US\$ 935M	US\$ 2836M

⁵⁶ David Scanlan, "Colombian Rebels Cost Nation \$12.5 Billion Since 1990," from Internet

⁵⁷ "Interview with Admiral Holdan Delgado Villamil," *El Tiempo*, August 18 1996, Santa Fé de Bogotá, from Internet.

⁵⁸ Douglas Farad, "New Focus: Political Violence," *Washington Post Foreign Service*, January 15, 1996, from Internet.

⁵⁹ La Rotta, p. 232.

This table shows the guerrilla groups' significant financial resources. Both groups collect sufficient resources from different sources to maintain and even increase their attacks on the government. The FARC receives more than 50% of their income from narco-trafficking. The ELN receives more than 50% from the extortion of the big companies that exploit oil, gold, and coal in Colombia. This group has a minor participation in narco-trafficking and growing of cocaine. But if the group requires more money it may compete with the FARC in the northern part of the country. The cost of maintaining a single guerrilla combatant for a month is US\$ 500; times twelve months this is US\$6,000; times 11,000 members, for a year US\$ 66 million; The armament cost, and other major logistic components are not included. Not all the money the groups receive goes to a common fund, normally the distribution is among the leaders of a front or block, or the money is sent to banks in Panama. The fact is that not all this income is invested in the guerrilla movement.

5. How Guerrillas Develop Activities⁶⁰

Table 7 is organized by departments, with data on the actions of the guerrilla groups during a year. The source for this data is the Colombian National Police during the year of 1994.⁶¹ The definition of the activity is events that were executed by the guerrilla groups with the purpose of attacking government forces or state institutions or for some other purpose such as: financing of the group, gaining influence, and presence, or in support from the civilian population, propaganda, recruitment.

This information allows some measurement of guerrilla activities and provides a sense of the seriousness of this conflict. The table shows the level of operations, influence, and presence of the guerrilla groups. It is necessary to create a scale to measure the real level of operations or influence over the different regions. The elements will be the number of guerrilla fronts, both rural and urban; the number of instances of extortion, kidnapping,

⁶⁰ It is clear that the criminal activities of the guerrilla groups become operations in the academic meaning.

⁶¹ Colombian National Police, *Criminalidad 1994*, Centro de Investigaciones Criminológicas, Santa Fé de Bogotá, Imprenta Fondo Rotatorio Policia, 1995, pp. 50-53, 55-61, 141, 165.

Table 7. Guerrilla Activities 1994

Department	Front FARC	Front ELN	Extor tion	Terro rist Actio ns	Kidn FARC	Kidn FLN	Assault	Narco	PO
Amazonas	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	6	57,017
Antioquia	3	9	18	121	17	49	43	249	1,825,150
Arauca	0	2	2	46	4	6	3	0	99,041
Atlántico	1	1	21	23	0	1	0	697	1,779,491
Bolívar	1	3	17	42	5	15	3	707	1,506,813
Boyacá	3	0	10	18	8	7	5	32	1,299,160
Caldas	1	1	34	5	1	0	5	683	920,648
Caquetá	5	0	10	24	16	0	4	47	324,950
Casanare	2	1	5	21	7	7	7	18	186,508
Cauca	3	1	9	51	8	20	17	265	959,693
Cesar	1	4	5	99	1	47	15	50	834,270
Chocó	1	2	8	5	3	13	6	9	332,193
Córdoba	1	0	11	5	7	1	0	85	1,149,887
Cund/marca	7	0	10	43	19	0	18	171	1,722,009
Guajira	1	1	4	28	1	5	8	82	363,368
Guainía	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	13,294
Guaviare	3	0	2	2	4	0	5	0	69,580
Magdalena	1	1	9	44	8	14	3	28	1,010,150
Meta	7	0	14	14	22	0	13	53	594,030
Nariño	1	1	28	16	15	4	6	298	1,192,605
N/ Santander	1	4	75	120	2	25	12	237	1,039,112
Putumayo	3	0	1	9	9	0	2	25	238,029
Quindío	1	1	6	3	1	0	2	1213	422,116
Risaralda	0	0	52	21	0	4	1	2765	762,982
Santander	5	4	10	108	14	49	15	34	867,911
S. Andrés	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	43	43,247
Sucre	1	2	15	15	5	12	6	56	628,738
Tolima	4	2	36	33	12	0	11	881	1,212,532
Huila	4	2	19	18	7	0	12	215	806,020
Urabá	2	1	11	26	52	1	7	53	410,388
Valle	1	1	25	14	5	1	6	279	1,557,952
Vaupés	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	37,241
Vichada	2	0	1	2	2	1	1	3	19,573
Bogotá AM	4	1	88	92	0	0	10	1736	5,131,582
B/manga AM	1	2	13	57	0	12	0	246	820,213
Cali AM	2	0	5	50	4	0	2	761	1,882,843
Medellín AM	1	2	34	174	2	2	2	1433	2,399,159
TOTAL	74*	49**	610	1352	261	296	250	13460	34,519,495

Front: Number of front by Department

Kidn : " Kidnapping

* this number means 62 fronts and 12 Mobil Companies FARC

** " " 34 fronts and 4 " " and 11 Urban fronts ELN

AM : This means that those cities have some suburban zones and they are the biggest cities, with more than one million of inhabitants.

assaults on populations, terrorist actions; and some measure of the narco-trafficking activities; the guerrilla's location, and the population in each department or major city.

Based on the data in Table 7 it can be concluded that these criminal organizations have increased their illicit activities in comparison with the last five years. Summarizing the data in Table 7: there were 610 extortions of different kinds, in the case of extortion the victims normally are reluctant to inform to the legal authorities, so the level of impunity is very high. There were 1,352 terrorist acts, 261 kidnappings by the FARC, 296 kidnappings by the ELN, 250 assaults to population and towns, and 13,460 crimes related to illicit drugs in all the stages of production and commercialization.

A relation of crimes and the departments can be presented in the following way:

1. Of the 37 regions studied, only five departments do not have the presence or influence by guerrilla groups. They are the farthest from the center of the country.
2. The five departments with the highest level of terrorism activities are Antioquia, North Santander, Santander, and Medellín AM. They also they had the largest number of guerrillas.
3. The regions where kidnapping by guerrillas are greatest are Antioquia, Santander, Urabá, Cesar, North Santander, Meta, and this coincides with the presence of the guerrilla groups.
4. The regions where the guerrilla assaults are the greatest are Antioquia, Cundinamarca, Cauca, Santander, Cesar, Meta.
5. The regions where the presence of guerrilla groups are the largest are Antioquia, (12), Cesar, (6), Cundinamarca, (7), Meta, (7), North Santander, (5), Santander, (9), Tolima, (6), Huila, (6), Cesar, (5),Caquetá, (5).

After this analysis it is important to make clear one point. According to the definition and scales proposed above, the most likely municipal influence appears in the departments where the activities or actions of the guerrilla are greatest. But some data is incomplete, the size of the population is limited, the channels of information are limited, and the guerrilla actually have only limited control. Some regions appear to have medium

levels of actions, such in the case of Guaviare, Putumayo, Arauca, Urabá. However, in those areas or regions, the guerrilla operation is increased because of the relation with the drugs is more important than that of other crimes, like kidnapping or assault.

6. The External Aid

At this time the only external support for the guerrilla groups is trade among arms smugglers and narco-traffickers. Therefore, for the purpose of this study this kind of logistic support will be considered as external aid. However, it is very clear to anyone in Colombia that the guerrillas do not receive any kind of external support to continue the armed struggle from other governments or organizations. The weapons market operates outside of international law and may be a possible connection with the narco-traffickers or trans-national criminal organizations. There is smuggling through Panama and Venezuela. In the case of Venezuela the FARC and ELN can collect weapons and armory caches either by sizing the Venezuelan troops in the border or by paying Venezuelans for that material.

It is important to remember that the initial support for these groups came from the Cuban revolution of the 1960s and 1970s. According to Timothy Wickham-Crowley:

The peasant republic of Marquetalia received some initial organizing help from Cuba and Chinese instructors. Later on the ELN, usually described as Fidelista in its Politics, began with the training of an entire cohort of its leaders in Cuba before returning to Colombia for its military activity.⁶²

More evidence of Cuban influence is related by Jorge Castañeda:

The M-19, the Cubans, and the name of Jaime Guillot Lara, who died in Havana of a heart attack. With this death, most likely, was buried conclusive proof of the Cuban-Colombian guerrillas link. In this case, the Cuban involved both in drugs and in shipping arms to M-19. He was arrested on December 4, 1981, in Mexico City.⁶³

Another author says that:

⁶² Wickham-Crowley, p. 31,89.

⁶³ Jorge Castañeda, *Utopia Unarmed* (New York, Vintage Books, 1993), p. 113.

Since 1980, the Castro regime has been using Colombian Narcotics ring to tunnel arms, as well as funds, to Colombian Guerrillas. In October, 1981, the Cuban government sent \$700,000 to purchase arms.⁶⁴

Some later evidence of the foreign support and the influence of Cuba among the Colombian guerrillas was the negotiation during the kidnapping of Juan Carlos Gaviria and the intervention of the Cuban Government. Mr. Gaviria was kidnapped the 2 of April 1996 by a guerrilla group. He is the brother of the former Colombian president Cesar Gaviria, now the General Secretary of the OAS. The influence in this kidnapping by Castro can be summarized in the following way, according to the weekly magazine *Semana*:

Fidel Castro personally ordered the special emissary of the leader of the guerrilla group to release Mr. Gaviria's brother. At the same time the OAS produced a communiqué against the Helms-Burton act as a pay off for the release.⁶⁵

On the other hand, it is very important to take into consideration an unusual issue. This is the dramatic case of the aid from the Colombian guerrillas to Cuba. This information is from two sources. The sources indicate talk of payback for the support of the Castro regime. The first is the newspaper *La Prensa* and the second source is Jesús La Rotta:

The ELN using false companies shipped coal to Cuba by boat from the hand Venezuela frontier. Sometimes they send money in cash to Cuba. On the other some ransom paid in dollars through European non-governmental organizations are going to Cuba to support the communist regime. The second source said...that the pay back to Cuba was sent by using drugs, coal, or cash for a significant amount of money US\$700 million to cover weapons and trainers given to the guerrilla groups.⁶⁶

The conclusion of this section on external aid is that it does not exist. However, in a political way Cuba has supported these guerrilla groups. That political support is behind the Cuban relations with Colombia. Now as Wickham-Crowley said in this case, all the

64 Arrieta, Orjuela, Sarmiento, Tokatlian; *Narcotráfico In Colombia* (Santa Fé de Bogotá, Tercer Mundo Editores 1990), p. 223.

65 "La Historia Secreta," *Semana*, June 15, 1996, pp. 1-12, from Internet.

66 La Rotta, p. 332.

resources come from internal sources. However, in the Colombian case, the smuggling of arms could lead to a different view with the presence of the narco-traffickers, experts in weapons smuggling, and an open door for laundering money. This evidence according to Bruce Bagley who said:

There may well also have been a connection between drugs and arms flow. If you can smuggle drugs out of Colombia, the same basic channels can be used to smuggle into Colombia, and that appears to have happened in a number of cases⁶⁷

According to others authors:

...by different sources we know that the guerrillas have established contacts with narco-trafficking with the purpose not only of exchanging drugs for arms but also to allow them to move into different countries especially Cuba, Mexico, and Eastern Europe and to obtain international knowledge and free access to the black market arms⁶⁸

The strongest evidence of this is in the Uraba region on the border with Panama where the struggle is among FARC, ELN, and groups on right wing to maintain control of this door to weapons and channel to drugs. According to the newspaper *El Tiempo*:

During the first four months in Uraba, municipalities of Turbo, Carepa, San Pedro de Uraba, Currulao, and Apartado had accomplish 15 attack against civil population with over 157 people killed, this area is in dispute between FARC and self-defense groups.⁶⁹

B. THE STATE MILITARY POWER

This section will consider some aspects that explain the situation of the armed forces in the violent political conflict in Colombia. Some problems for the armed forces are in that struggle against the guerrillas. In the first place the informal pressure that this actor receives from civil society, the NGO, the US government in the cases of human rights

⁶⁷ Bagley, p. 96.

⁶⁸ Arrieta, et al., p. 232.

⁶⁹ "Historia de Dolor y Muerte," *El Tiempo*, May 6, 1996, Santa Fé de Bogotá, from Internet.

violations and drug war, and the Venezuela government in the case of the border incidents with the guerrilla groups.

Additionally internal military resources should be addressed. It is the author's belief that the budget for the Colombian armed forces is not enough to maintain internal control in a country with the highest level of violence in the world, and one of the most powerful criminal, narco-traffickers, and largest guerrillas movements in the World. Another problem is that Colombia has the weakest judicial system in Latin America. The purpose of this section is to show the lack of internal military resources that sets limitations on the ability of the government to crush the guerrilla capacity or at least to reduce that capacity of the guerrilla groups.

Other variables are the effects of external military assistance, the organization and distribution between the armed forces and National Police, and the low percentage of military aid in comparison with the National Defense Budget.

This section will also present the most important operational results from the Armed Forces against the guerrilla groups and narco-traffickers in the last five years. This will allow a comparison with the effectiveness of those guerrilla groups. This information will show the efforts and results of many operations by the armed forces.

A question to be answered in this study is: "Why can't the government crush the guerrillas?" The government has forces that are modern and professional with experience in guerrilla warfare over 40 years in a country that does not have deep cultural grievances, racism, or religious problems. In the words of Malcolm Deas:

...concerns about the concepts of the political conflict in Colombia, in comparison with other countries especially in Latin America where poverty, famine, oligarchies and under development countries do not have the level of violence of Colombian society. That society does not present big differences between castes, a more unfair social economic system than Peru, Bolivia, and other countries in the last 40 years.⁷⁰

70 Malcolm Deas, Fernando Gaitán, "Reflexiones sobre la Violencia Política en Colombia," First Section in *Dos Ensayos Especulativos Sobre la Violencia en Colombia* (Santa Fé de Bogotá, Tercer Mundo Editores, 1995), p. 17.

How can the government implement measures to increase the budget, reform the judicial system, establish policies against narco-traffickers, an anti-insurgency policy, and involvement of the all government and civil society in the solution of this tragic situation?

At the conclusion of this chapter the author will answer the question as to whether there is a real equilibrium in Colombia.

1. Informal Pressures

The informal pressures is part of some problems for the armed forces and the government are in that struggle against the guerrillas, among then the following:

- The informal pressure that the armed forces receives from the civil society.
- The NGO, and the US government in the cases of human rights and drug war.
- The Venezuela government in the case of the border incidents with the guerrilla groups.

Before explaining who pressures the Colombia Armed Forces, and for that purpose, the words of scholar Robert Clark should be considered. He addresses how a government may solve a situation like Colombia's. The idea of Clark is that the pressure that comes from different sources push the government in different directions with only a limited number of possible outcomes:

Most violent insurgencies seem to end in one of two ways. One way is for the government in power to combine a vigorous policy of repression of the rebels with a judicious program of reforms, thus isolating the insurgents from their base of popular support and eventually defeating them militarily and politically. The second way is for the government's armed forces and/or the police to lose either their taste for combat or their confidence in the regime, and for the government itself to lose its legitimacy with the people. But the history of contemporary armed insurgencies suggest, then, that very few of them end as a result of a negotiated general truce or cease-fire.⁷¹

In Colombia a solution to this conflict will not be found easily. The conditions are complex, not only because of the makeup of the guerrilla groups and the effectiveness of the

⁷¹ Robert Clark, *Negotiating with ETA* (Reno Nevada, University of Nevada Press, 1988), p. 1.

government. There is a need for real commitment in the whole society before the real process of peaceful coexistence can begin among all the actors of Colombian society.

During the last 40 years the political violent conflict in Colombia was only in the hands of the armed forces and the guerrilla groups. Other actors had only a passing influence. The political or economic level of compromise between the groups and the Colombia armed forces has been very low. The normal direction of a compromise in Colombia is to pursue interest and influence, and get the best parts of the political pie for your group before any thought of the best solution to Colombia's problems.

The pressures on the armed forces come from three different sources. First pressure from Colombian civil society that considers this conflict dangerous to the future of the country. In an armed struggle it is very difficult to promote the consolidation of democracy, political participation, solutions for social and political problems, investment, security, education, production, economic development for all of the society. Second some pressure is domestic and some foreign, such as the case with non-governmental organizations (NGO's), who support human rights. The NGOs have an important role in this conflict, because they can bring about solutions if they are totally apolitical, if not they become a tool for other sectors in the conflict and the source of foreign pressure is by the US government that has special interest in the control of production and interdiction of illicit drugs in Colombia.

Third, pressure from Venezuela over the problems on the Colombian borders and Venezuela political instability in the last five years. Venezuela pursues the Colombian guerrillas incident on the borders to relieve internal political pressure with a nationalist anti-Colombian campaign. According to Raul Torres a Venezuelan Navy officer:

The Venezuelan government perceives the Colombian guerrilla movement to be a phenomenon that intensifies bilateral tensions between the two countries.⁷²

72 Raul Torres, "Venezuela and Colombia: Border Security Issues," Master's Thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, December 1994, p. 37.

2. Organization and Distribution of Armed and Security Forces

According to the Colombian Constitution, the president of the republic serves as Commander in Chief of the country's military and police forces. The president appoints the armed forces highest ranking officer to serve as head of the General Command of the military forces. In early 1990 President Gaviria appointed for the first time in 50 years a civilian as Minister of Defense. The current minister is also a civilian. That political change in the position has increased the level of civil- military relations. This was the beginning of an acknowledgment that defense problems are the responsibility of the entire political administration and head of the government.

The 1991 Colombian Constitution establishes a nonpartisan, apolitical military. Articles 216 through 223 of the constitution restrict the military's right of assembly, except by order of legitimate authority. In addition, these articles state that military and police personnel are ineligible to vote while on active duty and are not permitted to be candidates for elective office.

The army has primary responsibility in counter-guerrilla operations. These operations are normally established in regions of difficult access even by air or river. These operations require a large force in comparison with the national police or the other three forces. The air force or the navy provide support for the army operation in varying ways.

a. The National Army (EJC)

In 1995, the national army was composed of 119,000 active duty personnel including 70,000 conscripts. The troops under the command of the army represented some 75% percent of Colombia's total military personnel. The army has total responsibility for the public order in Colombia due to the increase of political violence and gives support to the national police and legitimate institutions. However, the army also has a plan for international conflict. The organization and configuration of this force is designed to fulfill its two major responsibilities: defense against internal and the external threats.

Each of the five army divisions have territorial command over 1/5 of the country's military regions in the national territory. Each division is organized into three or

four brigades, each brigade has two counter-guerrilla battalions. A national command is organized in the following way:

1. The I division is responsible for the northern part of the country. It has the 2nd brigade responsible for the departments of Atlántico, Guajira, Magdalena, and North part of Cesar. The 17th brigade, is responsible for the departments of Uraba, north of Chocó, and north part of Antioquia. The 4th brigade is responsible for the departments of Antioquia, the west part of Chocó, and Magdalena valley. The 11th brigade is responsible for departments of Córdoba and Sucre.
2. The II division is responsible for the central-east part of the country. It has the 5th brigade is responsible for departments of North Santander, Santander, Sought part of Cesar, and south part of Bolívar. The 14th brigade is responsible for Middle Magdalena. The 16th brigade is responsible for departments of Arauca. The 18th brigade in the department of Casanare, and North part of Vichada. The 1st Brigade is responsible for departments, Boyaca, and west part of Casanare.
3. The III division is responsible for the southwest part of the country, it has the following units, the 6th brigade is responsible for departments of Tolima, North part of Huila, and South part of Caldas, The 8th brigade is responsible for departments of Quindio, South part of Choco, and North part of Valle. The 3rd brigade is responsible for departments of Valle, Cauca, Narino, CEP, and Putumayo.
4. The IV division it is responsible for the southeastern part of the country, with the following brigades: The 7th brigade is responsible for departments of Meta and East part of Vichada. The first special forces brigade is responsible for the Department of Guaviare. The CUO, is responsible of the departments of Guania, Vaupes, and the west part of Vichada. The 9th brigade is responsible for Huila, and north Caqueta. The 12th brigade is responsible for Caqueta, and west part of Guaviare. The CUS, is responsible for the department of Amazonas. The division Commander has under his command the CUO and the CUS. and the new special forces brigade in San Jose del Guaviare.
5. The V division it is responsible for the metropolitan area of center of the country, with the following units: The 13th brigade is responsible for Bogota AM, and Cundinamarca. The 10th brigade is responsible for South Cundinamarca and North Tolima.

6. Other troops as the 20th brigade of intelligence and counterintelligence, the 15th brigade with the seven training school by branch, the 21th brigade of logistic support. The military academy and the war college.

Each brigade has three infantry battalions, one artillery battalion, one engineer battalion, one logistic battalion, one military police battalion, and one or two counter guerrilla battalions consisting of 400 professional soldiers.

Additionally, the army has three counter guerrilla brigades with 1,200 professional soldiers, and 50 counter guerrilla battalions with 400 professional soldiers each.⁷³ These brigades are mobile and are moved where the guerrillas are strongest. However, these mobile troops have a limited mobility because the number of helicopters is not great enough to move these battalions simultaneously. This capability is necessary in operations against the guerrilla groups especially in areas where the geographic and topographic conditions are difficult.

b. The National Navy (NAVY)

In 1995, the national navy had about 20,000 personnel including 6,000 marine conscripts, and 1,500 coast guard personnel. Personnel under the command of the national navy represent 12% of the country's total military forces.

From 1978 to 1988, the navy's corps of marine infantry benefited from a gradual build up. The marine corps was organized into five battalions. Two battalions each reported to the Atlantic marine brigade and the pacific marine brigade. These brigades corresponded to the navy's Caribbean command and the pacific command, respectively. Coordinated marine and army operations were carried out frequently during the late 1980s under the operational control of the army.

⁷³ The professional soldier has at least two years in the Army and receives a US\$250 dollars a month. The Army has 30,000 soldiers, in counter guerrilla units.

c. The Colombian Air Force: (FAC)

The Colombian air force had 12,000 personnel in 1995, including 3,500 conscripts. This force is 8% of the country's military forces.

The FAC has five bases around the country; and each one has two fighter squadrons. Three squadrons are dedicated to counterinsurgency missions, including a squadron of helicopters, heavy and light, a reconnaissance squadron and a transport squadron. The mission for this force is to support the mobility of the army for counter insurgency purposes.

d. The National Police (PN)

In 1995, the size of the national police was 110,000 personnel, of whom approximately 10 percent were civilians. The headquarters of the national police is located in Santa Fé de Bogotá, and it is supported by regional departments in large cities.

In addition to the force's primary responsibility for handling common crimes, its major responsibilities included narcotics interdiction, some counterinsurgency work, participation in civic action in rural areas, and riot control in the country's urban centers. A number of special police units functioned under the overall jurisdiction of the headquarters operations command. They included the radio patrol group, the anti-mugging group, the private surveillance group, the highway police, the tourist police, the juvenile police, the railroad police, and the operational group against extortion and kidnapping. The most important unit is the anti-narcotics police with a small air section equipped with 38 light helicopters and airplanes.

e. The Security Administrative Department (DAS)

The DAS is the principal organization responsible for enforcement of laws relating to national security. This organization has a national role comparable to that of the Federal Bureau of Investigations in the United States. The formal responsibilities under the DAS's mandate includes investigation of crimes against the internal security of the state, fraud against the state and its financial institutions, and crimes affecting individual liberty

and human rights. The DAS has responsibility for screening and maintaining records of foreigners who enter the nation and for enforcing immigrations laws. To carry out its mission, the DAS has both investigative and intelligence-gathering responsibilities. This organization answers to the minister of interior.

f. Why Can't the Government Crush the Guerrilla Groups?

After this description about the state military power, it is important to answer one of the most logical questions. Why can't the government crush the guerrilla groups? An answer to this question must include the three aspects which will be discussed in the following section.

(1) Not Enough Budget. This aspect was made clear in the above section in the discussion of internal resources and the international aid especially from the United States. However, according to the weekly magazine *Semana*:

The resources that the Army has only meet 45% of the weapons necessary, 32% of the communications necessary, 48% of the mobility and transport requirements, 75% of the logistic material such as boots, uniforms, special elements for combat purpose, also the Air Force has only 50% of the required capacity in support of counter insurgency operations (troops mobility).⁷⁴

(2) The Government Does Not Have the Necessary Judicial Tools. The tools to apply justice to those who maintain a struggle against the establishment do not currently exist. The following issue appeared in the newspaper *EL Tiempo* by Gabriel Rosas V.:

We don't have a national strategy against the narco-guerrilla. For example, during 1995 the Armed Forces captured 6,000 guerrillas in different circumstances, the Armed Forces spent time, money, troops, effort, planning, later 5,800 were liberated by the judges.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ "Economía de Guerra," *Semana*, Informe Especial, September 24, 1996, Santa Fé de Bogotá, from Internet.

⁷⁵ Ismael Medina, "Militares Más Plata pero con Resultados," *El Tiempo*, September 21, 1996, Santa Fé de Bogotá, from Internet.

Later the Minister of Defense points out:

...It is necessary to develop a national security policy that helps to solve the problem because until now the narco-guerrillas, narco-traffickers, not only make a joke of the justice system, but also use it against the legitimate authority. The narco-traffickers are now expert in using the law for their convenience.⁷⁶

Some of the measures to create a strong judicial system that would support the armed forces were stated by General Harold Bedoya Pizarro; the national army commander:

..among them, measures to protect military operations from the action of "tutelage." The Attorney General does would not have authority to investigate or take sanctions against the military members. The army can detain criminals for seven days for investigation. The creation of a national militia. Allow the functions of judicial police by members of the armed forces. Allow military mayors in municipalities or regions where the public order is difficult to maintain. Armed forces acting on evidence based on intelligence. A special agency to help military personnel under investigation.⁷⁷

(3) Narco-trafficking in the Society. This is the most important problem that prevents the armed forces from crushing the guerrilla groups. This crime has the capacity to corrupt the public sector. It also provides solutions for the peasants in short term for their economic problem. It appears to be a job to the people who do not have any other option.

3. Internal Military Resources

The Colombian defense budget from 1970-1996 (Table 8) shows the financial resources used to maintain public order and national security, to fight against the guerrillas, control narco-trafficking and the production of illicit drugs. The following table shows the distribution of expenses for personnel, regular expenses, transfer of funds among the

76 Juan C Esguerra, "Mindefensa Propone Nueva Estrategia de Seguridad Nacional," *El Tiempo*, September 19, 1996, Santa Fé de Bogotá, from Internet.

77 Harold Bedoya P, "Reformas para la Fuerza Publica," *El Tiempo*, September 6, 1996, Santa Fé de Bogotá, from Internet.

national entities and budget for investments in equipment and technology. Figures can be compared between the defense budget and the national budget. Also displayed the GDP and its respective percentage for the purpose of comparing the money that the armed forces has to assign in its strategy to solve this kind of conflict.

Table 8. Defense Budget, 1970-1996

Year	National Budget	Total Defense Budget	%GDP	Personnel	Expenditures	Transfer	Investment
1970	17.87	2.91	2.2591%	1667.10	0.61	0.40	0.28
1971	21.84	5.01	3.3179%	2075.30	0.61	0.52	1.87
1972	23.83	3.63	1.9744%	2248.00	0.53	0.55	0.38
1973	29.39	3.98	1.6909%	2362.00	0.77	0.67	0.26
1974	37.54	4.87	1.5604%	2941.00	0.77	0.91	0.35
1975	51.64	6.85	1.7444%	3781.70	1.08	1.48	0.63
1976	55.27	7.83	1.5178%	3975.20	1.23	1.56	1.18
1977	74.32	10.11	1.4574%	5299.10	1.63	2.44	0.90
1978	102.12	13.78	1.1961%	6861.20	3.71	2.29	1.13
1979	151.51	19.85	1.2975%	9589.00	4.74	4.03	1.79
1980	199.18	27.74	1.8131%	12253.50	5.70	7.01	3.15
1981	269.97	33.71	1.7546%	16517.30	6.45	9.06	2.20
1982	333.70	41.64	1.7207%	22107.60	6.80	11.02	2.39
1983	406.26	65.74	2.2213%	31201.80	12.69	16.44	6.38
1984	536.51	86.93	2.3262%	40175.30	8.98	20.46	18.56
1985	675.19	99.23	2.0621%	48904.30	12.64	23.80	15.40
1986	946.26	128.09	1.9474%	65300.00	11.57	29.38	23.86
1987	1208.26	169.75	1.9954%	85674.00	18.62	38.39	29.72
1988	1635.89	243.56	2.1426%	114408.70	28.03	49.36	55.31
1989	2218.88	315.56	2.1529%	148498.30	30.05	57.85	83.77
1990	3036.52	355.76	1.8150%	195199.80	40.56	28.92	97.13
1991	4234.10	453.42	1.7924%	252601.70	81.30	59.37	67.98
1992	4959.61	679.98	2.0938%	363497.20	127.92	81.73	118.10
1993	6487.50	1070.05	2.5325%	514492.00	248.94	116.99	205.59
1994	9797.26	1256.01	2.2997%	744540.00	244.41	182.46	107.69
1995	12201.23	1719.96	2.5040%	953583.00	298.25	339.11	158.58
1996	16915.10	2347.20	2.7842%	1159607.50	332.56	581.18	309.81

* This budget was prepared by the Colombian Ministry of Defense, Planning Office, in millions of pesos and converted to millions of dollars at the current rate of U.S.\$1 = 1.032 pesos

For a country in the circumstances of both conflict with the guerrilla and the narco-trafficking, there is not enough money to create conditions to unbalance the current equilibrium and put sufficient pressure on guerrilla groups for peace negotiations. As

everyone understands, it is impossible to totally eliminate the guerrillas even in a country with a modern industrialized infrastructure.

During the last ten years the increase in the GDP average for armed forces only .5 % and this was for salaries of the personnel. Resource of 2.1 percent of GDP is not sufficient to control violence in Colombia. The increase in the last five years of the defense budget does not represent a real increase because 13-15 percent of the total budget is for investments and about 87 percent is for common and current expenses. Most of the expenses are routine costs and not new investment in equipment or increases in the number of professional soldiers. Another figure about the Colombian armed forces, the armed forces personnel per 1000 population is 4. The GNP per capita is U\$1,339 and this is insufficient for a substantial increase in the defense budget under current economic conditions.

4. Operational Results of the Armed Forces

With the purpose of comparing the Colombian armed forces⁷⁸ operations against the guerrilla groups, the following table presents the number of engagements. These engagements represent combat between the armed forces and guerrillas groups.⁷⁹ The number of guerrillas captured is displayed because there is a relationship of captured guerrillas and crimes. After a combat situation some guerrillas became captured or they give up must taken to the judges of the Attorney General within the 72 hours.⁸⁰ In the same way the fatalities have to be recognized by judicial authorities as guerrillas or criminals.

The table includes the number of operations to search and control an area against those guerrilla groups. Also shown is the number of known desertions from the guerrillas groups or surrenders to the legal authorities are included. The data is collected by army

78 Ejército Nacional, *Estadísticas Últimas Actividades Grupos Armados*, unpublished, Dirección de Inteligencia, Santa fé de Bogotá, August 28, 1996, pp. 1-18.

79 The Colombian army has the primary responsibility in this kind of operation; other forces support these operations.

80 One of the most significant problems of the armed forces is that most of the guerrillas captured are later released by the judges. This is because the information submitted by intelligence agencies cannot be used against guerrillas.

Headquarters 24 hours a day. The data presented is from January 1, 1990 through December 31, 1995.

Table 9. Armed Forces Operations and Results

Operation	Group	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	Total
Search	ELN	235	203	280	438	468	573	2197
	FARC	87	272	342	581	561	641	2484
							Total	4681
Engagement	ELN	133	110	212	214	190	229	1088
	FARC	157	333	370	361	386	331	1938
							Total	3026
Captures	ELN	337	295	311	471	582	671	2667
	FARC	96	230	293	618	480	645	2362
							Total	5029
Surrenders	ELN	12	19	25	61	25	61	203
	FARC	29	52	53	250	152	134	670
							Total	873
Fatalities	ELN	237	193	291	325	225	252	1523
	FARC	209	445	506	411	414	360	2136
							Total	3659

From Table 9 armed forces operations, there are some interesting facts. For example, the difference in size of the ELN and FARC is almost 1:2. The number of captured is larger for ELN. The explanation is that the ELN has more urban front and the possibility of capture is higher. Another issue in this table is the small difference between casualties between ELN (1,523) and FARC (2,136), even though the ratio is 1:2.

In each of the groups 10% percent of their members leave for different reasons. In the total of search operations against ELN and FARC, 4,681 in five years, 65% end in combat situations or engagements. This means a high probability of combat in these operations.

The three most important results of an analysis of this table are, First, that the armed forces has a high level of efficiency in this struggle against the guerrilla groups. In the last five years, the number of captures (5,029), fatalities (3,659) and surrenders from the guerrillas groups (875) for a total of 9,161 guerrillas, while the armed forces had 2,354 fatalities in the same period. This represents 25% of the guerrilla fatalities. The second result of this analysis is the real capacity of recovery that the guerrilla groups must have to maintain the level of conflict intensity. The third result of that table is the lack of judicial

legislation to stop the judges who release most (85%) of the captured. Because the judicial system favored the criminal and not the state. And also the groups' method of recruitment, and the money they invest to keep a guerrilla force at constant illegal activities could explain this capacity to recover. Another possible issue is the effect of narco-trafficking.

5. External Assistance

The military aid from the United States over the last five years is decreasing, in particular the aid for counter-insurgency purposes in response to the end of the Cold War. Another is that in the recent years the policy makers are disengaging the US from Latin American countries, because of the end of Cold War. Moreover, the United States foreign policy in the current government has changed. The only thing that receives any important amount of money is for local drug enforcement. These moneys and grants are channeled through the National Police and anti-narcotic military units. In 1997 the military aid will be cut as a result of the tensions between the United States and Colombia and the de-certification of the Colombian government in the struggle against narco-trafficking.

The following figure shows how US aid to the Colombian government has decreased in recent years.

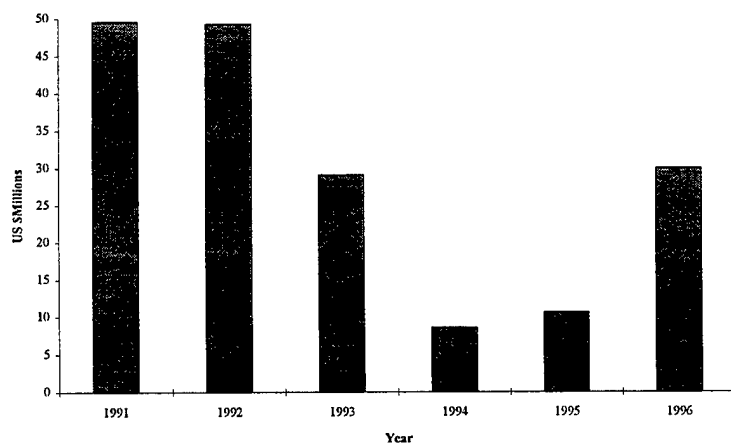


Figure 3. U.S. Military Assistance 1991-1996⁸¹

⁸¹ U.S. Overseas Loans and Grants and Assistance from International Organizations, 1981-1998, Office of the Budget, Bureau for Management, US Agency for International Development.

The US military aid is divided into economic support funds, (ESF), foreign military financing, (FMF), international military education and training, (IMET), and the international narcotics control, (INC), and (FMS) Foreign Military. The figure shows an average of US\$30 million a year. That figure represented 0.42% of the internal Colombian defense budget. For 1996 the money was expended in INC rather than IMET due to strained political relations between the two countries.

Washington's main interest in the Andean countries and specifically in Colombia, is the drug war. The US purpose is to reduce or control the growing, producing, shipping and interdiction of coca and poppies products at their source. Therefore the military aid is not targeted at the counterinsurgency effort. According to the US Southern Command:

The United States' interest is based in supporting the national counter-drug strategy, with a big pay off possible in the source countries. 100% of the world's cocaine comes from South America. In 1994 the cocaine production in Bolivia, Colombia, and Peru was 840 metric tons. Also in 1994 the World wide seizures: 303 metric tons of which 97 metric tons were in South America.⁸²

C. SUMMARY

The summary of this chapter has to deal with the primary actors of this conflict, the government armed forces and the guerrilla groups. Those results of this analysis will led to the following points:

1. The guerrillas' General Strategy and the Informal Pressures on the Armed Forces

The Colombian guerrilla groups are now at the point of no return in their purpose of changing the political system. The FARC group pursues its strategic plan called "Bolivarian Campaign for a New Colombia," and the ELN has changed their strategic plan from five war fronts to seven national strategic areas. The ELN and FARC tactical and strategic

⁸² MacCaffrey, p. 10.

objectives are to maintain the armed struggle, gain international political support through the NGO and to be recognized as major forces.

The state military power has the objective to maintain law and order in Colombia based in the national Constitution. The government armed forces receive informal pressure in this confrontation from different sources.

The first source is a civil society that feels itself in an insecure environment. Citizens that suffer attacks from the guerrilla groups want protection for themselves and their property.

The second source of pressure is the international NGOs. These organizations claim that human right rules apply to this kind of conflict. However, the guerrilla groups use the NGOs as a tactic against the armed forces.

The third source is the influence by other countries such as Venezuela, and the United States. Venezuela's case is related to the border incidents with some guerrillas groups. In the case of United States, it is their policy to fight the commerce of illicit drugs. This policy includes an eradication program to stop the production at the source.

2. Organization and Strategic Location of the Guerrilla and the Government Armed Forces

The original guerrilla organization of the 1960-1970s has changed. Both guerrilla groups have different concepts of block or sectors in country. The guerrilla groups are now faced with a high probability of military failure. This is taking into consideration that maintaining a level of secrecy and security is more difficult in a larger organization. In a cellular structure organization with high levels of compartmentalization secrecy and security can be maintained at the expense of rapid communication (ELN). Better communication and flexibility of the wave system of control is possible but all levels of the organization become dangerous to themselves and to the goals of the organization (FARC). This particular situation becomes critical in the case of crimes, narco-trafficking, kidnapping, or the extortion of large companies.

The ELN, to improve its organization, has created the C.R.A. Control Regional Areas coordinate the rural and the urban fronts of the ELN. ELN attempts to control the eastern chains of mountains that divide the central part of Colombia with the eastern flatlands.

The army has 30,000 professional soldiers, officers, NCOs and 70,000 conscript soldiers assigned to counter-guerrilla units. The role of the other forces, navy and air force, is to support land operations. The national police have responsibility in the urban cities and against the trafficking of illicit drugs and common crimes.

The explanation of why the government and the armed forces cannot crush the guerrilla groups is made up of three important factors:

- Not enough budget. There is only the 2.7% of the GDP for the guerrilla war, and almost 80% is expended in personnel and regular acquisitions rather than investment in new technology or equipment.
- The judicial tools are inadequate, to capture and keep under observation members of illegal organizations for a efficient amount of time.
- There is no national strategy against narco-trafficking. A national strategy would reduce the effect of narco-trafficking on the society.

3. The Financing of the Guerrilla Groups and the Internal and External Resources of the Armed Forces

The guerrilla financing system presents a special problem. Because the guerrillas have reliable resources from narco-trafficking and other traditional sources, the Colombian guerrilla groups have the largest guerrilla membership and a huge financing system in comparison with other guerrilla groups in Latin America. The guerrilla groups are maintaining the status quo rather than pressing for a revolution in Colombia. Their objective is not the revolution of Cuba or Nicaragua. They are trying to get a political solution with a high political and monetary profit for them as in the case of El Salvador. This reason pushes them to acquire financial resources from their traditional source of kidnapping, and now narco-trafficking and the extortion of large companies.

The FARC group has narco-trafficking as its principal source. FARC receives US\$ 935 Million a year from this source. On the other hand, the ELN uses extortion and kidnapping as its principal source of financing and has received US\$579 million a year. The ELN has participated very little in narco-trafficking.

The budget of the armed forces to reduce the guerrilla influence is US\$2,400 billion and is divided with all the agencies and institutions that make up the Colombian Ministry of Defense. Over the last ten years the increase in budget was 0.5% of the GDP. Eighty seven percent of this annual budget is for common and current expenses. Most of these expenses are routine costs and not new equipment or an increase in the number of professional soldiers instead of conscripts. The ratio of armed forces per 1000 population is 4, the GNP per capita in Colombia is US\$1,339.

4. Armed Forces' Operations And Guerrilla Activities

From the analysis of the guerrilla activities during 1994, it can be shown that those criminal organizations had increased their illicit activities. The level of guerrilla activity is 3,000 incidents a year. To summarize: 610 acts of extortion, 1,352 terrorist acts, 565 kidnappings, 250 assaults to towns, and 13,460 crimes related to illicit drugs in all stages of production and commercialization.

In the case of the armed forces operations, the two most important outcomes are presented in Table 9. First, the armed forces has a high level of efficiency in this struggle against the guerrilla groups. The second result of this analysis is the real capacity to recover by the guerrilla groups. In conclusion, this balance is evidence of an equilibrium between the guerrilla groups and the Colombian state and the armed forces.

In the last five years the army has inflicted numerous fatalities on the guerrilla groups. If the numbers of captures, casualties, and surrenders are added, the total would be 9,161, almost the entire membership at any one time of the guerrilla groups. The casualties in the armed forces were 2,354 or 25% of the number of fatalities for guerrillas. Every operation by the armed forces has a possibility of 65% ending in a combat engagement. This indicates that the armed forces is looking for the enemy and not avoiding combat.

5. External Aid to the guerrillas and the International Influence on the Conflict

In the case of external aid for guerrilla, the changes in the international environment did not make at impact on these groups. The resources to maintain the struggle come from the internal sources in Colombia rather than external. It is clear that the Colombian guerrillas do not receive international aid to fight against the government and that the end of the Cold War does not reduce their capacity for actions. The only possibility of external aid for the guerrilla groups is through the internal market of weapons smuggling and that market is linked with the drug traffickers. The remaining issue of importance is that Cuba still has ideological influence on some leaders of the guerrilla groups.

In the case of the external aid to fight the guerrilla groups, aid from the US is being reduced significantly. It is important to clarify that American aid is used for anti-narcotics purpose but the argument in this thesis is that the problem has to be a joint anti-narcotics, and anti-guerrilla actions. The decertification of the Colombian government is anti-drug effort is an unfair process by the US policy makers. These policy makers believe that the guerrilla is different from the narco-traffickers and there is no established link of these two Colombian problems. The external aid figure shows an average of US\$30 million a year. That figure represented 0.42% of the internal Colombian defense budget. However the US military aid is important for the preparation of the core members of the armed forces.

III. PEASANT SUPPORT

The second variable in the Wickham-Crowley theory is peasant support. Timothy Wickham-Crowley, holds that:

The three measures of degree of peasant support are: How many peasants are willing to commit resources to the guerrilla cause? What kind of resources are these persons willing to commit to the guerrillas? Under what range of circumstances will they commit that resource?⁸³

This chapter will analyze the peasant support for the Colombian guerrilla groups in terms of open political support, regional legacies, local influence, the narco-guerrilla and cocalero support (peasant self-interest). Also, the dimensions and level of peasant support and the process of resources committed, and the different methods of guerrilla recruitment will be examined.

This chapter will present theories with different views of the sources of peasant revolution. James Scott's view is that the peasants:

...where they are able, they respond to such historical processes that threaten their "moral economy" by rebelling against their neo-capitalist land lords and the landlords' governmental allies⁸⁴

other authors, among them Theda Skocpol argued:

... that peasants don't respond to a moral economy collectively shared by villagers. They respond rather to their own rational self-interest⁸⁵

Taking into consideration theories and analyses of the peasant support and self-interest, this author believes that in the Colombian case there is a mixture of both explanations. The explanation for that is the special background of the peasant as actors against the government that is responsible for the threat to their moral economy. Also, the peasant self-interest is taking advantage of the real opportunity of increasing their income by the coca

83 Wickham-Crowley, p. 52.

84 Ibid, p. 92.

85 Ibid.

growing under protection of the guerrilla groups. Both these forces have become a collective action channeled by the Marxist ideology against the state.

The Colombian peasant must be examined with the purpose of understanding the real peasant support for the guerrillas. Peasants supporting the guerrillas can be categorized into three groups. The first group is the peasant who works in licit agrarian production or related activities, for the first group this study will analyze peasant support and explain the degree of support. The second group is the peasant who works as a colonist for many years and who now works in the illicit drug product as coca, poppy, and marijuana. The third group is not a real peasant in the historical sense whose life is at the edge of survival, unemployed, but is an opportunist who moves in search of easy money. This group comes from the cities or towns and its support for the guerrillas is more an opportunity for business rather than a peasant background.

The second group of peasants, the "colonist" and the third group the "interested" will be referred to as the "cocalero" for identification.. The production of cocaine and how those people become linked with the narco-guerrilla will be addressed.

Figures on the urban-rural population of Colombia, according to the National Council of Illicit Drugs, was in 1985, 69.5%-31.5% respectively.⁸⁶ From the total population of 34,000,000 of Colombians, the number of peasants in the population would be 10,700,000. The number of peasants that the government considers to be "cocalero" is about 300,000.

A. OPEN POLITICAL SUPPORT

The open political support for the guerrillas using the recent election results is quite weak. The observation is that for both guerrilla movements the political support is not a first level concern. The only group that has established a bridge with political life in Colombia is the FARC. That began with the PCC in the 1960s, in the words of Wickham-Crowley

⁸⁶ Gabriel de Vega, *Compromiso de Colombia Frente al Problema Mundial de la Droga* (Santa Fé de Bogotá, Imprenta Nacional de Colombia, September 1995), p. 25.

The PCC arranged for many of these peasant guerrilla leaders to enter the upper echelons of the party. FARC's leadership was maintained largely by peasant leaders thrown up in self-defense areas during the course of la Violencia. The PCC's influence in rural areas was, however, quite modest compared to that of the major parties. A number of writers have argued that Liberal and Conservative loyalties at the local level dominated village life and often approached the pathological. In such a situation-even granting considerable decay in those loyalties during and after La Violencia- the PCC did not have the kind of political ties to the bulk of the peasantry that the main parties had.⁸⁷

Later the FARC group lost its channel with the PCC as a condition for the peace process, and created the UP as its political wing. This is a leftist party formed in 1985 to participate in electoral politics. It has close ties to the Communist Party and the FARC. Since its founding, the UP has had significant local electoral success. However, hundreds of its activists, including its presidential candidates in 1986, Jaime Pardo Leal, and in 1990, Bernardo Jaramillo Ossa, have been murdered by right-wing paramilitary groups. In May, 1996 FARC created the clandestine movement "Bolivarian Movement for a new Colombia."

In the case of the ELN with its long history it has only had a small participation in open political process. Its attempts try at open political support through a party was the MOEC in the mid 1960s. This action by the ELN is difficult to understand because from the beginning they have tried to impose the "Cuban Road" or model of revolution and that model requires the political support of the peasantry and people in general. Therefore the ELN do not believe in the importance of open political support. The only group that throughout Colombian political history has used the open political support to seize power was the M-19. But this was at a time when they were negotiating with the government in 1990. This political event of open political support for a former guerrilla group confirms that civil society is not interested in a violent or a real revolution in Colombia. The peasant

⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 145.

follows his traditional custom of taking part in the different elections of either the Liberal or Conservative parties.

The public reward for the M-19 was the electoral result in the next elections for president on 27, May 1990. The M-19 party won seats and a say in the congress to reform the 1886 constitution. According to the *Registraduría Nacional del Estado Civil*:

The M-19 party with 13% of the votes with a national total of 735,374, the Liberal party with 49% of the votes with 2,891,808, and the Conservative party with the 36% of the votes with 2,196,287.⁸⁸

To understand the real electoral support that Colombians gave to the parties that in some way represent the guerrilla groups' interest or political ideology, this section will use some results for president 1990-1994, and for mayors (Alcaldes) from 1988-1990 in comparison with the political support for the traditional parties. According to the *Registraduría Nacional de Colombia*.

Table 10. Open Political Support

Election	Year	Liberal	Conservative	UP*	M-19*	PCC*	Protest
National Level							
President	1990	2,891,808	2,169,287	754,740		186,430	
President	1994	2,725,043	2,604,771		219,214		242,277
Senate	1990	4,470,853	2,531,316		358,246	35,274	241,456
Senate Seats		66	39		7		2
Regional Level							
House of Rep.	1990	4,438,654	2,511,228	26,686	281,229		254,095
House Seats		117	65	1	8		4
Municipal Level							
# Mayoralties	1988	453	413	16			127
# Mayoralties	1990	495	412	11	3	1	108

In Table 10, which shows support for the guerrillas at the national level, it is important to clarify what protest vote means. Protest vote is the number of votes for independent candidates or religious or environmental parties, also it includes other groups of people who do not find any candidates for the positions and use the white vote (Voto blanco). The parties with UP, M-19, and PCC* are those who support the guerrilla activities or agree with the guerrillas' purpose of seizing power. In this table the only group to take

⁸⁸ Registraduría Nacional Del Estado Civil, *Resultados Electorales*, p. 16.

part in presidential elections in 1990-1994 was the M-19. They received some votes as a political reward for the peace process. At the national level the open political support for the parties that represent the guerrilla and their political objectives is very small. Even in the case of the M-19 group until the group entered the peace process with the legal government.

On the other hand the percentage of abstention in Colombia in 1990 was 56.63% of the total registered voters. The percentage of abstention in 1994 was 66,05% one of the highest in history. At the regional level, in this case the elections for senators and members of the house of representatives, it is not clear how many members supported the guerrillas politically. This is because they sometimes use other names or a coalition to get the votes to win a seat. The numbers of seats that support the parties that represent the political objectives of the guerrilla is small.

At the local level, the municipalities, it is evident that the parties that support the political objectives of the guerrilla movements in the last eight years have controlled 15 municipalities. The list of some municipalities where the mayor is elected by parties that support the guerrilla objectives are in 1988 through 1990, according to the *Registraduria Nacional del Estado Civil de Colombia* is as follows:

In 1988 the following municipalities Mutatá, (1,566 votes), Yondó, (1,041 votes), Acandí, (725 votes), Bojayá, (700 votes), Nuquí, (960 votes), El Castillo, (1,558 votes), Mesetas, (1,488 votes), Leyva, (921 votes), Tame, (2,641 votes). In 1990 Arauquita, (3,499 votes), Puerto Triunfo, (1,121 votes), Segovia, (1,223), San Pablo, (1,286 votes), Lejanías, (1,469 votes), Mesetas, (2,906 votes), Vista Hermosa, (2,059 votes), Cartagena del Chaira, (1,969 votes), La Montanita, (1,182 votes), Riosucio, (1,917 votes), Tame, (3,226 votes).⁸⁹

No single town in the list has an important social, economic, or political structure in comparison with the large cities. These municipalities normally are located far from the

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 5, 11, 15, 16, 107, 113, 144, 192, pp. 257-285.

regional or departmental cities. Therefore, there is open political support evident at the municipal level, but it is too weak to support a revolution.

However, in some cases coalition political movements in the municipalities (protest votes) are the best way to reach real objectives. An example is the case of the mayors elected by the protest vote in 1988 was in 130 municipalities, and in 1990, 107 municipalities.

In summary, the open political support in the national, regional, and municipal level where the majority population is made up of peasants, the political support for guerrillas is very weak. This support is decreasing for the parties that support politically or ideologically the guerrilla groups.

B. REGIONAL LEGACIES OF THE GUERRILLA MOVEMENTS

In this section, the author will try to answer the three following questions:

- Where does this particular form of political violence originate?
- What is the concept of sons of violence in the last three generations of Colombians?
- Why does violence remain in some areas of Colombia?

The answers to these questions begin with the history of violence and civil wars in the 19th century. Colombia has had nine civil wars or confrontations from 1830 to 1902.

According to Fernando Gaitán:

The civil war of the thousand days included all the country, it was high violent intensity, where later appeared guerrilla groups, a numerous turmoil in a great amount of municipalities, from that time they were called the liberal guerrilla, the Conservator party was the winner and the country was the loser. The figures to describe the death in that war were 85,000 people, however some authors have other estimates⁹⁰

90 Deas, "Aproximaciones a Las Teorías de La Violencia," Second Section, in *Dos Ensayos Especulativos Sobre la Violencia in Colombia* (Santa fé de Bogotá, Tercer Mundo Editores, 1995), p. 200.

Some regions after those civil wars of the 19th century became known as violent regions, among them Antioquia, Santander South and North, Cundinamarca, Boyaca, Tolima, Huila, Cauca, Quindio, Caldas. At that time those regions were the most important economic, political, and social places in the country.

In the 20th Century the defining event was the 1940-1960 period known as La Violencia. According to Jonathan Hartlyn:

The individual-level economic interest across all social groups and political sectarianism began to reinforce each other, polarizing the country in the opposing figures of Gómez for the conservatives and Gaitán for the Liberals.⁹¹

During this period the two most important events were *the Bogotazo* in 1948 and the Coup d'état in 1953. Again the areas where the level of political violence and guerrillas influence and activities were raised, the following according to Timothy Wickham-Crowley The department with substantial guerrilla activity are listed as follows in the approximate order of the movement's strength and located, Tolima, Huila, Santander, Caldas, Valle, Antioquia, Córdoba, and Department with only localized, fragmentary guerrilla influence, Bolívar, Boyacá, Cauca, Cundinamarca, Meta.⁹²

From that period of Violencia began an agrarian mobilization produced by the political violence and the effect of peasant exodus of liberal and conservative guerrillas. According to Malcolm Deas:

...the different exodus of the guerrilla groups from the scene is the corner stone to maintain the unity and the spirit of struggle, and also the beginning of the concept of a defensive guerrilla during the years and maybe until now⁹³

In the coffee production regions, those issues produced a colonization process. According to Alfredo Molano:

91 Jonathan Hartlyn, *The Politics of Coalition Rule in Colombia* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 37.

92 Wickham-Crowley, p. 108.

93 Deas, First Section, p. 72.

By the 1950, Colonization was linked to other factors among them the crisis of the peasant economy, demographic growth, and political violence.⁹⁴

This concept of colonization caused political violence and the crisis economy and with it appeared the “Independent Republics” in the late 1950s and early 1960s. These were regions such as:

- In Cundinamarca, Sumapaz and Tequendama, in Tolima, Marquetalia Davis, and Villarrica, in Meta, La Uribe, La Ucrania
- In Huila, El Pato and Guayabero, Ríochiquito, in the low Guayabero, the Caguan in Caquetá lands.
- In the middle Magdalena River Valley, Perija Mountains, the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, and Urabá in the north of Antioquia
- In the lower part of the Cauca Valley River and also the large part of the piedmont of the eastern plains, now the regions of Arauca, Guaviare, Meta, Casanare.
- Some of “Independent Republics” are completely unknown in the political life of Colombia.

The FARC learned from this colonization program that the control of a large territorial area was the key to their armed uprising. They have designed and are currently developing what they call “the Revolutionary Agrarian Reformation.” This agrarian program was launched on July 20th, 1964, and consists of the expropriations by means of invasion and kidnapping, banishment, or assassination of the landowners.

The guerrillas have found in the colonization in which they were active that they are the peripheral local power. Later the colonist become ruined because the poor market conditions, communications roads and the absence of the local, regional, and national government's aid. Most of the guerrilla leaders of the FARC come from this period. Their relatives and friends became the bosses for that organization. There is a hatred and

⁹⁴ Alfredo Molano, “Violence and Colonization,” in *Violence in Colombia*, eds. Charles Bergquist, Ricardo Peñaranda, 1992, p. 197.

resentment from that time of two to three generations against the state and the government. This group wishes to maintain the armed struggle in Colombia.

Recently, in the late 1980s, the links between the guerrilla and the land colonizers has become an important factor in the development of highly complex marriages among those persons without any real economical opportunity and the necessity of the guerrilla groups to finance their war.

The answer to the regional legacy question of the guerrillas and the political violence in Colombia must deal with the location of the guerrillas groups and the areas of guerrilla activity. The groups' influence is in some cases the same as that in the war of the thousand days. For example, Antioquia, Santander, Tolima, Huila, Cauca, Boyacá, Cundinamarca and other cases are related to the high level of violence during the period of the 1940s, and 1960's. Another example is Tolima, Huila, Meta, Cauca, Antioquia, Santander, Córdoba, Bolívar, and Quindío. Some new area where the violence has increased are Urabá, Guaviare, Meta, Casanare, Caquetá, Cesar, Cauca, south Tolima, East Cundinamarca, and middle Magdalena. This is the result of colonizers in the 1950s and 1960s and the exodus of people from the former independent republics. These people are now in places where the guerrillas have increased their financing system with the narco-trafficking.

C. LOCAL INFLUENCE

The concept of influence refers to some kind of pressure on the rural and urban population or on the local authorities. The term presence refers to some kind of operation that the guerrilla groups have developed for a specific target. Later this concept will enable an understanding of the local influences that the guerrillas have won back in the last decade. It is very important to make clear that in Colombia rural society is composed mainly of peasants who have some land or jobs outside of a town. Most local police groups have only a few policemen without any efficient support and are being asked to stop groups of 30 to 40 insurgents. The guerrilla can easily overwhelm the national police, and only the army

has the military capacity to neutralize a serious attack. But the army has to control large areas with less than the number of troops required.

It is necessary to formulate a definition of the terms guerrilla influence. Guerrilla influence means to have influence, or to have great weight over the decision makers in a limited region, or to have an influence on the persons and behavior in a given territory. It also means the power to check, to audit, to control by force or intimidation the conduct or decision of a given area or municipality.⁹⁵ The guerrilla groups do this through extortion, kidnapping, assaults and budget divergence; by threatening or even by an announcement of something against the authorities or persons.

The term guerrilla presence means to show, to display, to be present, actual and in person. This is a tactic of the guerrillas to give the impression of power, mobility and capacity to control. Normally they use the edge of the three main chains of mountains to move either through the flat country or through the valleys of the large rivers.

The following is a comment about the local control from the *Revista de Criminalidad*:

Both groups the FARC and the ELN had been developing the goals about the strength of the local control. In January we know that the CGSM harassed 225 municipalities in 1994.⁹⁶

Another source listed over 400 municipalities that have some level of influence or presence by the guerrilla groups.

The following information comes from Table 7 of guerrilla activities. This table is organized by departments and the data on actions of the guerrilla groups during a year period in 1994. This information established some measure for guerrilla presence or influence. Colombia has more than one thousand municipalities, unfortunately the data does not have the actions by municipalities. However, it shows the level of influence, presence, actions by the guerrilla groups. It is necessary to create a scale to measure the real influence

⁹⁵ Edwin Williams, *The Williams Spanish & English Dictionary* (Mexico, Fuentes Impresores SA, 1985), p. 477, 156, 340.

⁹⁶ Colombian National Police, *Revista de Criminalidad* 1994, p. 50, 53, 55, 61, 141, 149, 165.

over the different regions. The elements will be the number of guerrilla fronts both rural and urban, the number of extortions, the kidnappings, the assaults on the populations, the terrorist actions and in some measure the narco-trafficking activities; also included are the guerrilla's location. Those events have a strong relationship and suggest a scale of level of control, influence or presence:

- Low level presence and influence: The guerrilla actions are casual and their actions against the population or the government forces do not have the collaboration of the peasants of the region.
- Medium level of presence and influence: The population does not collaborate with the guerrilla groups, at least the tactic of a threat to the population is the key to maintain the equilibrium by the guerrilla. The local economy is weak but has some sources of employment and the local infrastructure shows the efficiency of the local regional and national government.
- High presence and influence: The main activities of the municipality are in control of the guerrilla group. This situation is found in regions where the government is absent and narco-trafficking is the only way to survive. However, in some cases the region is rich and the government is present, and the local economy is strong.

Figure 4 shows a strong relationship between the number of fronts of both guerrilla groups FARC and ELN, the number of terrorist acts. The first line shows the number of ELN Cuadrillas for each department, the second line is the number of FARC fronts in each department, the third line is the number of terrorist acts in that department. In Chapter III this data will be used to show the level of guerrilla influence, and the level of peasant support for the guerrilla groups.

Table 7 (Chapter II, page 39) shows the activities of the guerrilla groups in 1994. Using this table and the scale presented above the levels of presence or influence of guerrillas groups can be determined:

- Departments with a high probability of local influence or presence in their municipalities or regions are: Antioquia; Santander, North Santander, Meta, Cesar, Caquetá, Cundinamarca, Huila, Tolima

D. PEASANT SUPPORT AND SELF-INTEREST

1. The Narco-guerrilla Concept

The explanation about how the Guaviare and Guayabero become Coca zones has to deal with the colonization process after the so called "Independent Republics" as Alfredo Molano explained in the following way:

Here the links forged since the 1950s between land colonization and guerrillas took especial and particularly violent form in 1970s and 1980s under the influence of the cocaine trade. These regions were colonized by peasants who fled from the violence. Most of these colonists had lost their land and belongings and escaped with only their lives. A few, very few, had been organized by the two marching column, the first column of El Duda spread-out and, loosely organized settled in the piedmont of the eastern plains between La Uribe and Medellín Del Ariari, as well as in the middle courses of the Ariary, Guape, Guejar rivers. The second column originally headed toward the alto Guayabero and then spread out toward El Pato and Caguán and eventually toward the Caquetá river.⁹⁷

In the early 1980s the FARC group maintained control over the producers by applying rules to the peasant and the commercialization. For the colonist this conduct was known for years. Those groups held authority and regulated the commerce of their monopoly with force and their special system of dispensing justice. This was especially in regions where the presence of the government was too weak or too slow. Producers paid 10 percent and merchants paid eight percent for this service. These fees were in addition to those that the guerrilla maintained in their areas of influence.

The boom of the illicit crops brought with it confusion and disorder in all aspects of peasant society. Social, economic, political, and structural changes in the production relations, markets, justice system, and the cultural role of the former communities were effected. It added prostitution, unemployment, arms smuggling, and low respect for authority. It also resulted in loss of the land they had been receiving from agrarian organizations. According to Bruce Bagley:

⁹⁷ Molano, p. 208.

...a rarely considered implication of the drug boom in Colombia is it impacted on peasant movements, particularly on an organization called ANUC (National Association of Peasant Beneficiaries). This organization, which became radical in the early 1970s as a result of the conservative government's decision under the Pastrana administration to end the agrarian reform, has had the ground cut out from under it by the drug trade. This occurred precisely as the peasant organization was demanding agrarian reform throughout the 1960s and into the early 1970s, when the Colombian drug began. The drug boom, with its high wages and ability to generate employment, has provided a kind of escape valve for the Colombian peasantry which has reduced the levels of peasant organization.⁹⁸

According to Gabriel Marcella:

...It is important to consider the market logic from a peasant's perspective, coca often brings ten times the price of competing crops. It is hardy deep rooted woody bush which produce alkaloid-bearing leaves three or four times a year for 10' to 15 years⁹⁹ The peasant self interest and the cocalero according to the national council of Illicit Drugs has a good business. From every one hectare of coca it produces 2,500 pounds of coca leaves each 100 days. With this amount it is possible to produce 4,4 pounds of Coca row, the production a year is three to four times, the price for 13,2 pounds of coca row is approximately in Colombia US\$10,048 (each pound US\$ 382). Later this product in Chicago, Los Angeles, Miami, New York. Later the same pound (US\$382) will cost between US\$5,000-US\$20,000 dollars. In Europe the same pound cost will be between US\$10,000 and US\$45,000 dollars.¹⁰⁰

The current situation explains this relationship between the guerrillas and narco-trafficking and the recent changes to law in Colombia. Special Act #0717 from the Colombian government, April, 1996, deals with special public order zones. This decree has an important implication for the departments where the growing of coca has developed as an industry. The local markets of precursors or chemical products are maintained by the pressure of illicit drugs. The departments in this situation are Meta, Vichada, Guaviare,

98 Bagley, p. 97.

99 Gabriel Marcella, *Warriors in Peace Time* (HIFOR, England, Frank Cass, 1994), p. 77.

100 De Vega, pp. 31-34.

Vaupés, Caquetá, Putumayo. (same guerrilla-colonize zones in the 1950s-1960s) Among the effects of the measure considered to be important are the following:¹⁰¹

- Limitations to the trade and sale of cement, petroleum, gasoline, and chemical precursors. Normally these are used as chemical precursors for illicit drugs.
- Control of peasant movements by the military commander.
- Control of the different means of transport.
- Martial Law from 18:00 to 06:00. No one can move at that time.
- The operational control will be by the army officer in charge of the operation, not the civil authority.

According to the newspaper *El Tiempo* one result of this measure:

...was that the consumption of gasoline in a place where the cars are few in number is minimum and was of 19,000 gallons by day, and tons of cement where all the houses are constructed with lumber, everything was a precursor and being consumed to produce cocaine¹⁰².

The armed forces began with Operation Conquer II in April 1996, aimed at getting control of zones known for coca-poppy production, most of them in the southern part of Colombia. In Caqueta a few days after the application of the law, the first manifestation was the assassination of the governor of Caquetá department by the XV front of the FARC on 16 June 1996. After the application of the special law the narco guerrilla theory took on more credibility. The law along with the "Cocalero"¹⁰³ operation confirmed the existence of this sinister linkage. A strike began in July 1996. This strike had an important characteristic. For the first time the guerrilla groups of the FARC and 32nd front and 42nd and 48th fronts in Putumayo, and 15th, 14th, 49th, 3rd fronts in Caqueta, and the first front, 44th front and the JJR company and RM company took an open part in the strikes and pushed

101 "Para El Orden Público," *El Tiempo*, May 19, 1995, Santa Fé de Bogotá, from Internet.

102 "Primeras Medidas Especiales en Miraflores," *El Tiempo*, May 16, 1995, Santa Fé de Bogotá, from Internet

103 The "Cocalero" refers to the peasants who grow and produce cocaine in the south of Colombia.

the people to demand that the government stop the eradication programs, and change the legislation.

Another important consequence of the peasant protest was the step back in the relation of the Judicial system and the armed forces, especially with the case of the judicial order that stopped the most important operation against the producers of cocaine and poppy. The Armed Forces was trying to block 50,000 peasants (cocaleros) that were going to the main city of Florencia a southern department. A judge of the region used a judicial tool¹⁰⁴ "La tutela" to protect (tutelar) the civil right of movement of the peasants. Then the Commander of the armed forces and The commander of the army said that would not abide by that judicial order.

The peasant strike presented a dangerous balance of other consequences according to the newspaper *El Tiempo*:

...of this strike after 26 days of protest against the measure of the government and the eradication and fumigation programs the result were: seven people dead, 72 wounded, a loss of US\$55 million.¹⁰⁵

There were consequences for the guerrillas as well. The guerrillas lost money with these measures and it weakened their financing system. With this protest they wanted to show support for the peasants and paint the state and armed forces as a common enemy. The purpose was to increase their own support in the same way that violence's offspring had been accustomed to in the last 40 years. It is important to show the level of protest in Colombia during 1996 against the eradication of illicit crops. The true dimension of the conflict and the importance of the protest is that cocalero support is the most important issue to the FARC in their engine for armed struggle. The cycle of protest began in Caquetá in the south and lasted 45 days. The protest was made up of 55,000 peasants. The peasants were asking to stop the eradication program. They were also asking for US\$2,500 dollars on the average per hectare for coca leaves that the government wished to cut.

104 "La Agenda Verde," *Semana*, September 2, 1996, Santa Fé de Bogotá, from Internet.

105 Antonio Caballero, "La ineptitud," *Semana*, August 25, 1996, Santa Fé de Bogotá, from Internet.

In the department of Bolívar the protest was for a duration of 15 days, made up of 4,000 peasants. This protest was again to stop the eradication program. There were also protests in the departments of Guaviare, Putumayo, and Cauca.

An analysis of this situation of the peasant protest against the eradication program shows the degree of peasant support for the guerrillas. But this support is given for the particular circumstance of the growing of illicit crop for cocalero benefits. Peasant self interest in this case is the relationship with the guerrillas. There is some support for protection, for judicial conditions, and narco traffickers.

The agreement between the government and the cocalero was to stop the eradication program and for the government to buy a hectare of coca at US\$2,300 with to many implications to the law enforcement in this field.

2. Coca-guerrilla Areas

The location of coca-guerrilla areas is the result of important factors in history of these departments in the late 19th and early 20th century. Beginning with the politically violent conflict among the Colombians, these departments were the former independent republics of the 1950s and 1960s. Guerrillas move there to find an easier place to defend against the government as in these areas the government presence is limited by resources budget, and the efficiency of the state's bureaucracy.

According to the Consejo Nacional de Estupefacientes, (National Council on Illicit Drugs):

The available statistics show that Colombia has 40,000 hectares of coca areas, and 20,000 hectares of poppy growing areas, and 9,000 hectares of marihuana growing areas¹⁰⁶

In the case of the FARC's fronts the locations that coincide with the coca production¹⁰⁷ are: Caquetá, Guaviare, Meta, Tolima, Huila, Cauca, Nariño, Putumayo). In the case of the ELN's cuadrillas the locations that coincide with the coca-production are: Bolívar, North

¹⁰⁶ De Vega, p. 28.

¹⁰⁷ Ejercito Nacional, Presentation to the Anti-Drugs Commission of the U.S. Congress, Washington, D.C.

part of Antioquia, Arauca, North part of Cauca, North part of Nariño and North Santander.¹⁰⁸

According to Luis Villamarín:

...in the same way that the guerrilla influence in 1985 was 62% of the municipalities called "of colonization" and 44% municipalities of colonization of "border or frontier", today is growing to 93% to the municipalities "of colonization" and 79% to the colonization of "frontier or border"¹⁰⁹

3. Methods of Recruitment

The guerrilla recruitment had four stages with a close relationship to the development of the Colombian conflict. The first stage of recruitment was from the guerrilla liberal and conservative period of the early 1950s. The second stage was from the effects of the colonization by the offspring of the violence in the early 1960s. The third stage was the ideological or romantic stage from universities students and professors, and messianic guerrillas with the unworkable plans for of seizing power. The last stage is the narco-guerrilla effect where different social levels do business with each other. Clandestinely growing or producing coca and poppy has created an illegal way of living, and the most secure way to insure this living is to join the guerrillas.

This section will take into consideration the recruitment in the narco-guerrilla stage.

According to *Semana*:

In 1996 there were 89 young guerrilla members captured or turned into the ICBF; 2,000 boys and girls ages 13-15 years had taken part in guerrilla actions, and 23 guerrilla-boys gave themselves up to the authorities and have become part of this investigation¹¹⁰

According to Malcolm Deas:

¹⁰⁸ De Vega, pp. 103-105.

¹⁰⁹ Villamarín, p. 145.

¹¹⁰ "Soldaditos de Plomo," *Semana*, , May 1996, Santa Fé de Bogotá, from Internet.

...the recruitment of some of those guerrilla groups is highly organized through militias of support, the guerrilla rank-and file is very young, and sometimes they are paid the first month and become part of the revolution¹¹¹

According to *El Tiempo*:

...most of guerrilla boys come to the groups voluntary, but others come by force or for the money that is offered, then they receive a few things needed to survive¹¹²

Most of the recruitment is from people that have some relations with coca production or cocaleros, that need another job for survival.

E. LEVEL OF PEASANT SUPPORT

To understand the peasant support for the guerrilla groups in Colombia it is necessary to consider the above description of the Colombian peasant and the development of political violence in Colombia over a 90 year period. The following will use the three kinds of peasants in Colombia to form an analysis of peasant support.

First is the peasant who lives under the law. The analysis of peasant support will explain the degree of support that they give to the guerrilla groups. This is the peasant who follows the legal way to produce and grow crops and who has a social and cultural background with the land. For example, a producer of coffee, potatoes, corn, and other kinds of products. This type of peasant, in the real sense, does not support the guerrilla activity. He is in fact another victim of the guerrillas.

The second and third kind of peasant is the colonist and the peasant (Nomad) or "cocalero". This is a mixture of people who come from the cities or towns, and also from the colonist areas. For this group the production of cocaine is a business opportunity. This is how those people become linked with the narco-guerrilla concept rather than their peasant

¹¹¹ Deas, p. 75.

¹¹² "Salario, Salud, Sexo," *El Tiempo*, May 27, 1996, Santa Fé de Bogotá, from Internet.

background. Normally a colonist is a peasant who has worked his life and now has nothing. Their relation with the state is distant and they do not believe in the central government.

Using the explanation above and the scale developed by Timothy Wickham-Crowley to measure the peasant support, this section will present a hypothetical analysis of guerrilla support in Colombia. Timothy Wickham-Crowley proposed a scale from the lowest degree to the highest degree of support using the definition in the following table:

1.	Non-reporting of the guerrilla presence to the authorities.
2.	Offering food and another service to the guerrillas.
3.	Offering to serve as guides, lookouts, or errand runners for the guerrillas.
4.	Offering shelter to the guerrillas.
5.	Offering organizational cooperation with guerrillas at the village level, including making of weaponry, participation in schools and civil defense, etc.
6.	Offering occasional armed service to the guerrillas (militia service).
7.	Abandoning one's field and work to become a full-time combatant in the guerrilla unit. ¹¹³

To understand this scale it is necessary to review the issues presented in this chapter.

- Regional guerrilla's legacy
- Peasant self-interest or cocalero support
- Local influence by guerrilla groups

These issues are related to the level of peasant support. By reviewing this issue it is possible to approximate the level of peasant support for the guerrilla groups in Colombia in the recent years.

Using the Wickham-Crowley scale, the letter A represents passive support to the guerrillas and the letter G represents active participation in guerrilla activity.

The following Figure shows the relationship between the peasant origin (type of peasant) and the local influence or presence of the guerrilla groups.

¹¹³ Wickham-Crowley, p. 54.

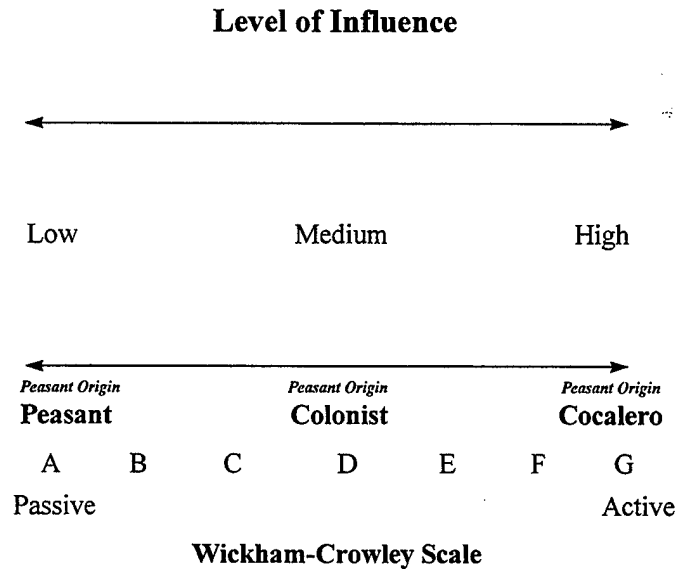


Figure 5. Level of Peasant Support

The explanation of Figure 5 is as follows; the level of peasant support depends on the level of guerrilla influence and the peasant's origin. The probability of a high level of support is determined by the peasant origin or status. If the origin of the peasant is Cocalero then the likelihood is that the level of support is active (7) or high. If the origin is peasant, regardless of the level of influence, then the level of support is (1) or passive or limited. If the peasant origin is colonist, the peasant support will depend up on the level of influence of the guerrillas groups.

This model could be used as an approach for further research of peasant support for the guerrilla groups in Colombia. The model would require the collection of data in a study or multiple examples in different parts of the country.

F. SUMMARY

In Colombia, the concept of the origin of peasant rebellions is a mixture of theories of Theda Skocpol and James Scott. The Colombian case is a mixture in the sense that peasants have responded to the historical processes that threaten their moral economy, by rebelling against their landlords and the government. At the same time some of them are

responding to their peasant self-interest because they do not believe in the concept of a moral economy collectively.

1. Open Political Support

The open political support for the guerrilla groups is weak at the national level. At the regional level there is a small representation. However at the municipal level the groups have some influence. The coalition system has become another political option at the municipal level. From a total of 1000 municipalities the groups have open political support in 17. In a coalition system as a protest vote, support is strong in 107 municipalities.

2. Legacies of Violence

Do the people carry their rebellions with them? The Colombian case provides strong evidence that the members of the two guerrilla groups' have a background of violence and that they work in the same areas because they know that the likelihood of support is also high.

Consider that in some places the level of violence in the 19th century was higher, than in the middle of the 20th century (1950s, 1960s). Also, that these same places that had high levels of political violence are where the liberal guerrillas developed their activities. The areas of colonization in the 1950s, 1960s and the exodus of people from the independent republics, are where the guerrillas groups now maintain a high influence or presence. New areas with high levels of violence are related to narco-trafficking and the guerrillas.

3. Guerrillas' Local Influence

For both guerrilla groups one of the most important objectives and tasks is the consolidation of some level of local influence at the municipal level. They have shown a presence in almost 400 municipalities and in more than 30 departments throughout the country.

From the table of guerrilla activities, in 1994 (p39) we can establish a level of influence as being high, medium, and low. This is done by taking into consideration the number of guerrilla groups, and their criminal activities.

4. Peasant Self-interest or Cocalero Support

Peasant support in Colombia must be divided into three categories: the typical peasant, the colonist, and the cocalero. With a recent Colombian army operation called "Conquest" in the south part of the country a clear link was established between the guerrillas and the production and protection of coca. As a result of the operation, the guerrilla group pressured the peasant, colonist and cocalero to protest against the central government and the Army. This protest was of the coca eradication program. The number of peasant cocaleros mobilized in this protest in different zones of the country was close to 200,000 persons. The protesters' objective was to stop the eradication program, a demand for better living conditions and large projects by the government in these areas as a condition for reducing the growing of coca products.

Another condition of the protesters was the reimbursement of US\$2500 for each hectare that the government had eradicated. An important factor to note was the close relationship between the coca zones and the guerrilla areas. Today 93% of the municipalities with coca production has a guerrilla presence.

The guerrilla groups have changed their recruitment methods in the recent years. An example of this is the cocalero that begins to work with the coca production, later he becomes a member of the guerrillas. He joins the guerrillas for two reasons: First, for protection and as a condition to stay in business. More than 40% of the guerrilla members are young but the leadership is held by older guerrilla members. Second the market logic from a peasant's perspective is that coca often brings ten times the price of competing crops.

5. Levels of Peasant Support

In the Colombian case the level of peasant support has direct relationship with two variables, the origin of the peasant (peasant, colonist, cocalero), and the level of influence of the guerrilla groups.

IV. THE STATE WEAKNESS AND THE EMERGENCE OF DUAL POWER

This chapter will address the weakness of the state and the emergence of dual power. This variable of the theory established by Timothy Wickham-Crowley concerns the success and failure of the guerrilla revolutionary movements in Latin America. Military strength and peasant support are not enough to ensure a successful revolution. A situation of multiple sovereignty or dual power¹¹⁴ must exist, and the passive members of the society must transfer their consent from the incumbent to the new "governments."¹¹⁵ Wickham-Crowley combines Skocpol's theory that a regime's weakness are responsible for revolutions, with Tilly's theory that revolutionary movements are responsible for revolutions. Wickham-Crowley does this by asserting that a regime's weakness allows revolutionary movements to emerge. Therefore the revolutionary movements may produce a state of multiple sovereignty which contributes to the revolutionary's success. With the purpose to define, and present the weakness of the Colombian state, the following is a discussion of some issues in the politics and society of Colombia.

Before beginning the sections of this chapter, it is necessary to consider Timothy Wickham-Crowley's statement:

Powerful revolutionary movements did indeed "make" revolutions in Cuba and Nicaragua, but only because they faced regimes that exhibited structural weaknesses in the face of an increasingly national opposition.¹¹⁶

Wickham-Crowley used in his theory the analysis of the patrimonial praetorian regime or mafiocracy to analyze the weakness of the state in Cuba under Batista, and Nicaragua under Somoza. In Colombia, the last dictatorship was General Rojas Pinilla from 1953-1957. In this section of consolidation of democracy in Colombia, it is necessary to review the political history of the last few years. The nature of the military regime in

114 The emergency of a parallel way of authority was called "dual Power" by Trotsky.

115 This kind of new government is represented in the Colombian case by the guerrillas strategic plans. Normally, they call this "new Colombia" that they are trying to "build" from the ashes of the current society.

116 Wickham-Crowley, p. 7.

Colombia from 1953-1957 was that it was an authoritarian regime but with some level of pluralism in its decisions and policies.

One author's, Jonathan Hartlyn, opinion about the Colombian state is as follow:

Historically the Colombian state has been weak state, although during the past few decades state autonomy and capacity have increased unevenly, and the intended and unintended consequences of different administrations' efforts in this direction are important.¹¹⁷

According to another scholar Bruce Bagley:

It is important to point out that Colombia probably has a stronger state, a state more capable of penetrating into a variety of key areas of the country (although not the more remote areas), than does Bolivia. The Colombian Government has been able to use selective repression against peasant organizations in zones where there have been some traces of the drug trade in order to control them, and if unable to co-opt them, then to repress them.¹¹⁸

The third variable is the weakness of the state and dual power. Wickham-Crowley established a measure to this particular variable in term of middle and upper classes, political parties, consolidation of democracy, (the patrimonial praetorian regime), mass media effect, the possible mass revolutionary, and the international Influence.

A. THE UPPER AND MIDDLE CLASSES IN POLITICS

In Colombia the upper class was composed of 24 families in the 1950s and 1960s. As a modern third world country Colombia has more than 1,000 powerful families that represent the top leaders in all the economic entrepreneurs and politicians. With the strength of the Colombian economy in the last 20 years (about 3-5% of economic growth), the upper class has expanded along with the middle class. However, the middle class remains weak, but bigger than 20 years ago.

The explanation of the relationship between national politics and the middle class is supported by the level of consolidation of democracy and decentralization of the central

117 Hartlyn, p. 7.

118 Bagley, p. 97.

government that was responsible for everything. After 10 years of planning decentralization and regionalization of the state administration and with regional and local election of the leaders. The central government is still held responsible for all the regional problems; indeed even for the local administration of faraway towns.

According to Timothy Wickham-Crowley:

Colombia's middle class did have a hard entrepreneurial core in Caldas and Antioquia (Valle, Cundinamarca, Santander, and others). On the other hand, the bulk of the bureaucratic and professional middle class was composed of downwardly mobile cadet sons of the Colombian upper class, whose intellectual and political sights were still set firmly on the social world. Hence their sense of class identity was set firmly by that experience of sliding. Politically, Colombia's middle class, like all other social classes had been vertically integrated into one of Colombia's dominant political parties, the liberal and the conservative¹¹⁹

In Colombia the upper and middle classes have made the parties stronger political institutions, then mass electoral democracies. Those factors produced weak support for insurgency. In the last 15 years the real support for the insurgency was presented in remote areas, not in the major cities. According to Catherine LeGrand

" Both parties were members of the upper-middle class sectors. The urban and rural masses become identified with both of the parties also but only exceptionally in leadership roles and in most cases presumably in a dependent/ clientelist relationship."¹²⁰

B. POLITICAL PARTIES

The political parties in Colombia can be thought of in colors, blue (Conservatives) and red (Liberals). Not many years ago in Colombia, people on election day would dress according to the their party. Indeed some times the same comrades could be asked to dress

¹¹⁹ Wickham-Crowley, p. 162.

¹²⁰ Catherine Legrand, "Agrarian Antecedents of the Violence," in *Violencia in Colombia*, p. 24.

contrary to the color of their party. However it is important to discuss the origin of the parties.

The origin of Colombian political parties was, according to Jonathan Hartlyn:

...ideological differences between the two parties were more significant in the nineteenth century than in the twentieth. In general, the conservatives were wedded to a view that approximated the previous colonial order, emphasizing close cooperation between the church and the state, a strong central administration and protectionism. The Liberals, more influenced by the industrial, liberal-democratic powers of the nineteenth century, generally argued for federalism, separation of church and state and free-trade economic policies. These ideological differences blended with and at times were superseded by more purely personalistic and regional disputes. Although the parties in the nineteenth century were essentially factional divisions within the small ruling oligarchy, the lower classes were drawn into the intermittent violent conflicts between them, especially in rural areas. Both parties were heterogeneous in terms of their regional bases and the socioeconomic origin of their adherents.¹²¹

The role of the Church has been significant in the origin of the political parties according to Jonathan Hartlyn:

...the role of the Church in all areas of national life was entrenched by the signing of a Concordat with the Vatican in 1887, in addition, by the 1890s, the parties had established more formal structures, with party directories and party conventions.¹²²

One of the characteristics of the Colombian political parties is the elite agreement of 1957, which has led the country to a process of consolidation of democracy for almost 40 years. The definition of elite according with Michael Burton, Richard Gunther, and John Higley:

We define Elite as persons who are able, by virtue of their strategic positions in powerful organizations, to affect national political outcomes regularly and substantially. Elite are the principal decision makers.¹²³

¹²¹ Hartlyn, p. 19.

¹²² Ibid., p. 25.

¹²³ Michael Burton, Richard Gunther, and John Higley, *Elites and Democratic Consolidation in Latin America and Southern Europe* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 8.

Once the dictator in 1953 began to reform the political life, the leaders of the liberal and conservative parties began to think of how to return democracy to the country, if an opportunity should appear. The transition was started by two actors the elite of the liberal and conservative parties, and the military junta of 1957. From this starts the process of consolidation, the National Front and the beginnings of the guerrillas in Colombia.

That elite settlement has brought stability and survival for the democracy over a long period of time. However, the consensus was limited and rules that were established for the political game were narrow. The democratic institutions did not operate efficiently. Another result of this elite settlement, in the sense of the consensus, was the term of consociational democracy. The cooperation between the parties with the years of rule became extreme.

According to Alexander Wilde:

...the consociational character of Colombian democracy was clearly oligarchic. It assumed the continuing control of mass mobilization by traditional party elite. Convivencia was primarily a matter of agreement between national fractional leaders and depended to a great degree on personal relationships among them.¹²⁴

This situation has come to the point where party factions some times change their name to a family name. Some examples are López, (Lopismo), Pastrana, (Pastranismo), Rojas, (Rojismo) Laureano Gómez, (Laureanismo), and in the recent years, Turbay (Turbayismo), and Samper, (Samperismo). This has made the concept of a party unclear and created parties without a ideology as demonstrated by their political programs. The name for this kind of phenomenon could be Caudillismo.

Before using the term consociational democracy, it should be pointed out that the Colombian case of consociational democracy is a reality. The most important characteristics of this kind of democracy according to Lijphart cited by Vincent Maphai are four:

¹²⁴ Alexander Wilde, "Conversations Among Gentlemen's," in *Breakdown of Democratic Regimes in Latin America* (Baltimore, Maryland, John Hopkins University Press, 1978), p. 34.

...sharing of executive power by all significant groups (government by grand coalition); such groups' retention of a high degree of cultural and regional autonomy; proportionality in the distribution of civil-service positions, public funds, and legislative seats...; and a minority veto on most vital issues.¹²⁵

The evidence for this was Article 120 of the 1886 Colombian National Constitution, dating from the National Front, according to Jorge Osterling:

This article ruled that the governing party must name members of the other major party to senior government positions¹²⁶

This rule was in effect until the reform of 1991. However, appointments to position were still made by consensus among the leaders of the second party in the last election.

Both political parties have had some problems that have limited their credibility. Politicians have become individualist, creating their own parties with a considerable amount of factionalism. Therefore the parties do not have serious governing programs or structured ideologies. Both are more interested in being elected to gain access to public resources.

Colombian political movements tend to organize themselves around strong leaders. The leaders themselves tend to gravitate toward the base of power held by the two traditional parties. According to Juan Roman:

Early on, the Colombian parties were dominated by a close circle of professional politicians from the upper and middle classes. They were territorially decentralized, with departments as the basic electoral units, and decision making performed by the national congressmen. Even if the members of a party were in alignment with one leader, it did not indicate the presence of an oligarchic structure for decision making; the relationship was more of a reciprocal one. The center of historical partisan activity was in the congress. Due to the lack of organizational strength, the congressmen have depended significantly on their electoral machinery for reelection. The basic resource for bargaining has been governmental patronage in the form of bureaucratic employment and dispensation of funds.¹²⁷

125 Vincent Maphai, "A Season For Power -Sharing," *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 7, No. 1, January 1996, p. 67.

126 Osterling, p. 107.

127 Juan Roman, "Guerrilla Violence in Colombia: Examining Causes and Consequences," Master's Thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 1994, p. 43.

In other words, the factor of bossism (Caciquismo)¹²⁸ that has until recently played an important role in electoral decisions of some regions. Another method is patronage for a bureaucratic position (Clientelismo).

Taking in consideration Dahl's scale to see the democracy, the concept of institutions for making government policies depend on votes and other expressions of preference. An example of this is a change or revocatory mandate in the Senate and House of Representatives with the plebiscite (Constituent) in 1991. The plebiscite was for the purpose of electing representatives to reform the Colombian Constitution of 1886. Before this time no one could claim legitimacy for congressmen, and indeed this is the issue that led to these important changes in the legislative bodies. Due to the multiple problems of political corruption among the congressmen in different ways during the last four decades. The main changes in the legislative bodies according to Professor Rodrigo Losada:

From the total senators elected in 1990 (113 members), only 30 members remain today in their chairs, two of them went down to the House of representatives and 81 are out of the body, From the total representatives elected in 1990 (119 members), only five members remain in the chairs, 50 members went up to the Senate and 144 went out of this institutions, this shows the great level of mobility among this legislative branch of the government¹²⁹

However, even with current members of the Senate and the House of Representatives the decisions of Colombia's political institutions are not in accordance with the preferences of most of the people. One example was the recent political trial to the president in the congress, who became innocent, even to the evidence of the issues that show the contrary, and also the public protest against the people involved in the 8,000 process.

In the words of a former Colombian Political leader, Jorge E Gaitán, in 1948 before his assassination:

128 Bossy or powerful person (Cacique) was a pejorative term for a traditional local or regional political leader, who controls the electoral outcome for a party or faction.

129 Rodrigo Losada, "Cambia La Clase Politica," *Revista, Dinero*, Santa Fé de Bogotá, June 1996, from Internet.

The political country didn't know the national country¹³⁰

With this phrase Gaitán explains that the concept of Democracy is different in each part of the country, with the biggest differences between the cities, regions, and towns. It follows of course, that the development of the nation-state must be uniform in most aspects, but especially in the political aspect. Gaitán explains that in Colombia the political groups do not take into consideration regional necessities, problems, or conditions. The only concern of the people involved in politics are their personal interest. Therefore the behavior of a political leader and professional politician in Colombia maintains the difference between the political country and the national country.

The legitimacy of the government throughout the history of Colombia has never been as low as it is now with the president under investigation for a connection with narco-trafficking along with other important government members. On the other hand a good indicator of the consolidation is the absence of an anti-system party. But in Colombia there are three anti-systems movements. The guerrilla movements, narco-trafficking and sectors of civil society ask every day to change the government. All governments after the National Front have been attacked for their legitimacy, but the current government marks the lowest point.

According to Larry Diamond et al.:

...democratic legitimacy derives, when it is most stable and secure, from an intrinsic value commitment rooted in the political culture at all levels of society.....through the maintenance of civil order, personal security, adjudication and arbitration of conflicts, and a minimum of predictability in the making and implementation of decisions.¹³¹

C. CONSOLIDATION OF DEMOCRACY IN COLOMBIA

An indicator of consolidation proposed by Gunther, and others:

130 Charles Bergquist, *Los Trabajadores en la Historia Latin-Americana* (Santa Fé de Bogotá, Tercer Mundo Editores, 1988), p. 416.

131 Larry Diamond, Juan Linz, Seymour Martin Lipset, *Politics in Developing Countries* (Boulder, Colorado, Lynne Rienner, 1995) p. 10.

How can the analyst determine if a regime is consolidated? [then they answered]. While the passing of a severe test (alternation in power between former rivals, continued widespread support and stability during times of extreme economic hardship, successful defeat and punishment of a handful of strategically placed rebels, or regime stability in the face of a radical restructuring of the party system) may constitute evidence that a regime is consolidated.¹³²

In order to develop the argument this study will present the reason for the breakdown of democracy in 1953. According to Jorge Osterling:

General Rojas Pinilla did not want to govern, but he took power under the pressure of public opinion. Peace, justice, and liberty became his political motto, by which he meant an immediate end to any form of inter-party violence or rural banditry. Once in power he received the immediate support of all sectors of society.¹³³

At that point the process of consolidation began with the explanation of the National Front and its consequences for the next four decades (1957-1996). Later in this section this study will use a different approach to define the concept of democracy in Colombia.

After a period of important changes to social policies, negotiations with the liberal guerrillas and the implementation of gigantic public works projects, the criticism of his policies and himself, General Rojas was replaced by a Military Junta of five flag members-four general officers and one Admiral on 10 May 1957. This was named the "opinion coup d'état."

The process of consolidation of democracy in Colombia begun as a result of agreements on the Mediterranean seacoast of Sitges and Benidorm in Spain, on 20 July 1956. Laureano Gomez and Alberto Lleras Camargo, approved the transition to the National Front on December 1st, of 1957.

132 Richard Gunther, Nikiforos Diamandouros, Hans-Jurgen Puhle, *The Politics of Democratic Consolidation* (Baltimore, Maryland, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), p. 12.

133 Jorge Osterling, p. 93.

Another way to define the nature of this previous non-democratic regime that fits General Rojas Pinilla's seizure of power, was that it was driven by circumstances. In the words of Larry Diamond et al:

Typically, however, military role expansion is induced by the corruption, stagnation, and malfunction of democratic institutions to the point at which the military is increasingly called upon to maintain order and comes to see itself as the country's only salvation.¹³⁴

An in-depth analysis of the outcome of this agreement between the elites-the National Front, is that it was created to solve and neutralize the parties. The parties were unable to lead the country and to establish peace, democracy, and institutions like the government, justice, and legitimacy. However the outcome itself was the first big obstacle to the consolidation of democracy. This is because the concept of party ideology was changed by the concept of populism, patronage, and sectarianism. The struggle for power was not between parties, it was between families and partisans. The later 1960s and early 1970s saw an increase in discontent and an opportunity to import alien ideologies for solutions to Colombia problems. In a sense the first significant agreement in Colombian society did not solve the deep political cleavages or offer opportunities for solutions. The logical outcome of the agreement between the elites was the guerrilla eruption in national life.

According to Jorge Osterling:

The first national front administration coincided with the first years of the Cuban revolution, the rebirth of leftist Latin American groups, and the Cuban efforts to implement Che Guevara's policy of exporting the revolution to neighboring countries.¹³⁵

Some definitions to describe the ideal of democracy and the Colombian democracy were consider, but the most closest to the reality is the definition of democracy that was used by Juan Linz was:

¹³⁴ Diamond, et al., p. 46.

¹³⁵ Osterling, p. 97.

When it allows the free formulation of political preferences, through the use of basic freedoms of association, information, and communication, for the purpose of free competition between leaders to validate at regular intervals by nonviolent means their claim to rule,...without excluding any effective political community from expressing their preference.¹³⁶

In order to fit this concept of democracy into the Colombian reality, this study uses this definition to measure the conditions of democracy in Colombia.

This analysis will confirm some of problems that do not allow the democracy to function properly.

First, the free formulation of preferences. This variable appears to be partial in the sense that there is a limited formulation by some minorities. This is usual in most democratic systems, however the guerrilla and other violent groups by no means legally show preferences.

Secondly, the free competition among leaders is very difficult to have with the violence between the competitors for a position at different level. The best example is the violence in the popular elections of mayors in the municipal levels.

Political community is partial because the different actors in the political arena use different means to put forward their preferences. The level of participation is low in some areas of the country where the socio-economic conditions are minimal.

D. MASS MEDIA EFFECTS

The mass media in Colombia has a significant role in the political life in recent years. The free press has the right to criticize the different political actors. The major newspaper, a radio, TV, magazines belong to the great economic groups, and even some of them to the leaders of the political parties. The government has adopted some regulations to manage the news related to the public; for example Law #80 of 1993 about radio stations. Those laws have helped to maintain some control over the propaganda effect of guerrilla groups terrorist acts.

¹³⁶ Gunther, p. 6.

In Colombia the mass media has a great impact on everyday life. The communications resources have been growing. There are access to about 20 international TV stations, 3 national TV stations, 7 regional TV stations, 1,000 radio stations at the regional, and local level, and more than one hundred newspapers, magazines, at the national level. These mass media tools are useful as a check and balance on the political administrations.

According to María Isabel Rueda " Now the Colombian congress is changing the actual law with the purpose of democratize the Colombian Television. However she point out that this change is not convenient because it can perhaps politicize more the mass media."¹³⁷

Normally information is open and available, the best example is the current 8,000 process investigation. This is where important politicians and government officials were investigated. The mass media system made a historical contribution and kept the public informed as the issue developed.

In summary, the mass media companies do not support the guerrilla groups or take an openly government position. They present the information of the political violent conflict in an objective way. However they are sometimes made a tool of the guerrilla groups in their goal of increasing support from the population.

E. THE POSSIBILITY OF A MASS REVOLUTIONARY COALITION

Some investigation of when it is possible for a mass revolutionary coalition to develop is necessary to properly address the subject of the weakness of the state. Some events in political history have created this phenomenon. In the case of Cuba and Nicaragua the result was a revolutionary mass was the Castro revolution. In the case of Colombia during the armed struggle and political violence there have been many opportunities for the guerrilla group to take advantage of the situation and call the masses to the revolution the most important are as follow:

¹³⁷ Maria Isabel Rueda, "Las FM," *Semana*, November 12, 1996, Santa fé de Bogotá, from Internet.

- On April 19th, 1970, during the presidential elections, a curious incident occurred. On the evening of the elections day, after the polls had been closed, it was clear to many political analysts that opposition candidate Rojas Pinilla was well ahead of national front candidate, Pastrana. By 2:00 am of 20 April, he had received 1,235,679 votes while Pastrana 1,121, 958 votes. However at 3:00 am an hour later, the government presented different figures of the election and two days later the president was Pastrana. This could fuse a revolt, but nothing happened.
- The failure of the peace process negotiations between the government and the guerrilla groups during the Betancourt government. The end was the assault on the Justice Palace in the heart of the state, Bolivar square in Bogota in 1985, and more than 200 people died in front the Place of the Presidents.
- The assassination of the various presidential candidates who symbolized the hope and the alternative for the creation of political conditions for consolidation of democracy.

Luis C. Galán S.	Liberal	1989
Jaime Pardo Leal	Union Patriótica	1987
Carlos Pizarro L	M-19	1990
José Antequera	Union Patriótica	1989
Bernardo Jaramillo	Union patriótica	1989
Alvaro Gómez	Conservator	1995
Other judges, military officer, senators, representatives.		

- The 8,000 process, against the financing of Samper's campaign, and at least 100 important persons in the political life in Colombia, among them four ministers of this government, the procurator, senators, members of the house of representatives, the former Attorney General, and important civilians of different economic and social groups. The main issue was business related with narco-traffickers, and the use of laundered money to finance political campaigns and for illicit enrichment.

All these events show the difficult stages of the consolidation of democracy of Colombia in the last 40 years. The political violence, the corruption among the political elites, the electoral fraud in the free competition for votes or support the effect of the narco-trafficking on the society. However those events described above did not produce the impulse required for a mass revolution although they did create a situation of deep disorder and destroyed the hopes of many people that believe in Colombia.

The 8000 processes was the only opportunity that the guerrillas took to push a social revolution. We must take into consideration the loss of legitimacy of the current government and the support that the guerrilla groups receive from the peasant and the population. This was because the characteristics were unique for the 40 years of the democracy. Their action was an attempt to stop all the highway traffic in the country, and mobilized more than one million peasants. However this attempt do not have the support of the upper class, the media, or the most of the Colombians.

It is clear that in Colombia, at least in the short term, there is unlikely to be a coalition that would create a mass revolution.

F. THE INTERNATIONAL INFLUENCES

In the words of Timothy Wickham Crowley:

However, one final contributor to the fall of the Batista and Somoza regimes was the withdrawal of international support by the United States.¹³⁸

At this moment US-Colombian relations are at the most difficult stage in the history between the two nations. The cause is the problematic situation of narco-trafficking and illicit drugs. The best explanation of the status of Colombia was presented in the International Narcotics Control Strategy Report of March 1996:

In 1995, Colombia remained the World's leading producer and distributor of cocaine and a major supplier of heroin and marihuana. The cultivation of illicit coca continued to increase, and in 1995 Colombia, became, despite eradication efforts, the world's second largest producer of coca, surpassing Bolivia. Colombia is home to narcotics trafficking organizations which are among the most powerful and ruthless criminal enterprises in the World.¹³⁹

In addition the US government has decertified the Colombian effort against the production and trafficking of illicit drugs. There are also the cuts in military aid that was important in the counter guerrilla effort by the Armed Forces. The US government

¹³⁸ Wickham-Crowley, p. 12.

¹³⁹ U.S. Department of State, "Colombia Summary," *International Narcotics Control Strategic Report*, March 1996.

canceled the US visa of the Colombian President Ernesto Samper as a consequence of the famous 8,000 process for accepting money (US\$6 million) from the Cali Syndicate. A measure by the US was the publication of a list of important persons from the high Colombian political leaders and Generals who it believes are involved with narcotics traffickers. The next possible step will be an economics sanction by US and multinational organizations such as the World Bank, FMI, etc. However, the most dangerous situation for the Colombian democracy was publicly stated by the US ambassador in Colombia, Mr. Myles Frechette, on a TV news program. When he was being interviewed about a probable coup d'état, he said:

Some civilian people came to my office in August 1995 to ask about the possibility of US support for a change of the actual president for a short period of time.¹⁴⁰

This international influence in the case of the US counter narcotic eradication programs shows also a new outcome. The peasant support for the guerrillas and the development of serious violent incidents in the south part of the country caused by the eradication programs and the application of a special law to control the public order. These incidents are linked to the legislation against narco-traffickers. This legislation will be the most sensitive issue in Colombia over the next few years. The US policy-makers will see closely the legislative agenda against narco-traffickers. The result will be the active role of the US influence in the current time.

G. SUMMARY

1. Upper and Middle Classes

In Colombia the upper class is no longer composed of 24 families. As a modern third world country it has more than 1000 powerful families. These families represent the heads of many companies and institutions in all the of Colombian life. The middle class is

¹⁴⁰ "El Gran Misterio," *Semana*, July 10, 1996, Santa Fé de Bogotá, from Internet.

weak but bigger smaller than 20 years ago. and, in comparison with Cuba and Nicaragua the middle class would be very strong.

2. Political Parties

Colombian political parties have tended to organize themselves around strong leaders, who themselves have tended to gravitate toward power base held by the two traditional parties, Liberal and Conservative.

Some important issues define the political parties in Colombia, the elite agreement of 1957, the history of violence, elections, bossism, patronage and factionalism in the last 40 years.

Both political parties have had some problems that block the participation and effect their credibility. These parties do not represent any ideologies because politicians have become individualists and only believe in being elected regardless of the parties, ideologies or political objectives.

The anti-system for the political parties is the guerrilla groups and the narco-trafficking.

Many of the guerrilla groups were originally supported by their countries' communist parties, though most eventually separated themselves from the communists. The important point is that guerrilla movements, although usually part of the response of oppressed peoples to government repression, are also a result of a marginal political elite who have been excluded from full political power. The Colombian case show strong evidence in this respect.

3. Consolidation of Democracy

Colombia began a process of democratic consolidation in 1957 after the elite agreement of Sitges. But during the 40 years of this process there is evidence of a reverse process with the appearances of high level of political violence, political corruption, the increasing strength of the guerrilla groups, the protest vote, narco-trafficking, and finally the violence and murder during 40 years of this political violent conflict. Therefore Colombian democracy has been unconsolidated for many years.

The answer to the question why the last breakdown of democracy occurred, is simply the political violent conflict. This answer needs some interpretation. Guerrilla violence and insurgence in Colombia, since the mid-twentieth century, has been carried out by organizations that come from various origins, purposes, and social characteristics. These rather complex set of groups have been involved in violent political actions in attempts to seize power. Colombian governments and other political actors have responded to those challenges in an equal variety of forms.

The political violence is the term that Colombians have adopted to describe this complex political and social phenomenon.

4. The Mass Media Effects

The mass media companies do not support the guerrilla groups or take an openly government position. They present the information of the political violent conflict in an objective way. However, they sometimes are made a tool of the guerrilla groups in their goal of increasing support from the population in the run for catch the news. They have also the willingness to present the news rather than taking position in the conflict.

5. The Possibility of a Mass Revolutionary Coalition

The guerrilla groups in the last 40 years have had four opportunities to call for a generalized uprising. But they do not have the political influence to call for a coalition that could challenge the Colombian state. The first opportunity was the elections of April 19th, 1970 and the possibility of fraud against the new party ANAPO. The second was the failure of the peace process in 1985 and the assault on the Justice Palace in front of the Presidential Office. The third was the murders in the last ten years of more than 50 important political figures. These figures represented an opportunity for a better future to many people in Colombia. The fourth opportunity was the 8,000 process against more than 100 politicians and important persons for receiving money from narco-trafficking and for political corruption.

6. International Influence

The relations among the US-Colombian governments will have a significant effect on the outcome of the current political crisis. At this moment US-Colombia relations are at the lowest ebb in the history between the two nations. The cause is the problematic situation of narco-trafficking of illicit drugs and the investigations about contributions of narco-traffickers to political campaigns.

V. CONCLUSIONS

A. THE FIRST VARIABLE: MILITARY BALANCE

The first variable in Wickham-Crowley's theory concerns the relative military balance between the government and the guerrillas. The first point to be made is that the Colombian government devotes minimum resources to its armed forces for the control of the guerrillas. These resources are only sufficient to maintain the status quo in the conflict. Although the conflict is a military conflict, the government has not pursued the conflict on the same basis as a sovereign country would, if at war. There is no national mobilization, there is no suppression of government critics or the use of Martial law to defend the nation. With this point, it can be concluded that the Colombian Government's goal is to maintain the conflict at an equilibrium.

For this variable, the guerrillas are simply too weak to achieve anything other than the status quo. Without the revolutionary mass, More than ten thousand guerrillas could not be expected to assume control of the entire country. In this case, the guerrillas are held at an equilibrium by the lack of support required to assume control of the country.

The best summary of this conflict in the last five years is in the words of Daniel García Peña, the Peace Commissioner:

Their economic impact today is higher than ever...the human cost too has been high. Between 1990-1994, clashes cost the rebels 3,100 members and the army 1,800 with more than 1,350 civilian dead. If the rebels were merely fighting for what they claim, they might get some sympathy, their demands, though disparate, share common themes: Actions against poverty, respect for human rights, no more pursuit by paramilitary groups, plus a guarantee that if they lay down their arms they can engage in peaceful politicsMr. García Peña emphasized that they have long abandoned any dreams of a Marxist state, politically they are reformist.¹⁴¹

¹⁴¹ "Colombia's Other Gangsters," *The Economist*, March 25, 1996, p. 48.

This conflict requires that all of Colombian society, government, and institutions help to find solutions. However the peace process must have participation in negotiations of the armed forces because the conflict is a real military conflict with real implications for all Colombian society. According to Augusto Ramírez Ocampo, a member of the National Commission of Conciliation:

...the country has to know and also the guerrilla groups that the peace process must be negotiated in front or involving the armed forces.¹⁴²

B. THE SECOND VARIABLE: PEASANT SUPPORT

In this study it was pointed out that although the guerrillas have peasant support, this support is based on the political history of Colombia. The peasant groups that support the guerrillas are involved in the cultivation of cocaine and groups dispossessed in the collapse of the independent republics. For the traditional peasant in Colombia, the guerrilla groups represent a typical criminal protection racket and are not the political or social defender represented by the revolutions of Cuba and Nicaragua. Without these peasants, the guerrillas will never achieve the revolutionary mass necessary for a successful takeover of Colombia.

The equilibrium, in this case, for the government is the long history of social problems related to the peasants in Colombia. If the government does not address these problems, the peasants will always be a source for the guerrillas. The dangerous trend was demonstrated by the eradication protest where the peasants' economic interest were supported by the guerrillas and the narco-traffickers and opposed by the government, interest driven in part by international pressure. This trend is dangerous because for the first time it gave the guerrillas significant support by the peasants.

¹⁴² "La Paz no puede hacerse sin Militares," *El Tiempo*, Section Politica, August 28, 1996, from Internet.

C. THE THIRD VARIABLE: THE WEAKNESS OF THE STATE

In Colombia the upper class was composed of 24 families in the 1950s. As a modern third world country Colombia has more than 1,000 powerful families that represent the top entrepreneurs and politicians. With the strength of Colombia's economy in the last 20 years (about 3-5% of economic growth) the upper class has expanded along with the middle class. However, the middle class remains weak but bigger than 20 years ago. Political power in Colombia is based on the interests of competing groups. These groups over time have come to agreements that make peaceful government possible. However, this process has not led to a consolidated democracy where all participants believe they have influence and power to create change. Colombia recently has begun serious reforms to bring about a more widely supported government. However, the state is still weak because of the residual effects of the very long standing agreements between the conservative and liberal parties in the National Front period.

A contributing factor to the weakness of the state is the ineffectiveness of the judicial system. The Colombian judicial system has been under assault from both the guerrillas and narco-traffickers for many years. Because of this weakness, the power of the government has been diluted with threats and corruption by the guerrillas and narco-traffickers. The average citizen of Colombia no longer believes that the judicial system or the government has the tools to protect him from the threat of the narco-guerrillas. This creates a dangerous system of dual power or dual authority in Colombia.

D. GENERAL CONCLUSION

In summary, the equilibrium between the actors in the conflict is not structural. It is a circumstance of the effect of the narco-trafficking on the society and the failure of the judicial system of the state. The dangerous trend was demonstrated by the eradication protest where the peasants' economic interest were supported by the guerrillas and the narco-traffickers and opposed by the government, interest driven in part by international pressure. This trend is dangerous because for the first time it gave the guerrillas significant

support by the peasants. If the balance of this conflict changes and actions is taken against the two problems, then the equilibrium will be broken. As the study shows the armed forces have the level of efficiency to bring the guerrilla groups to negotiations."

APPENDIX

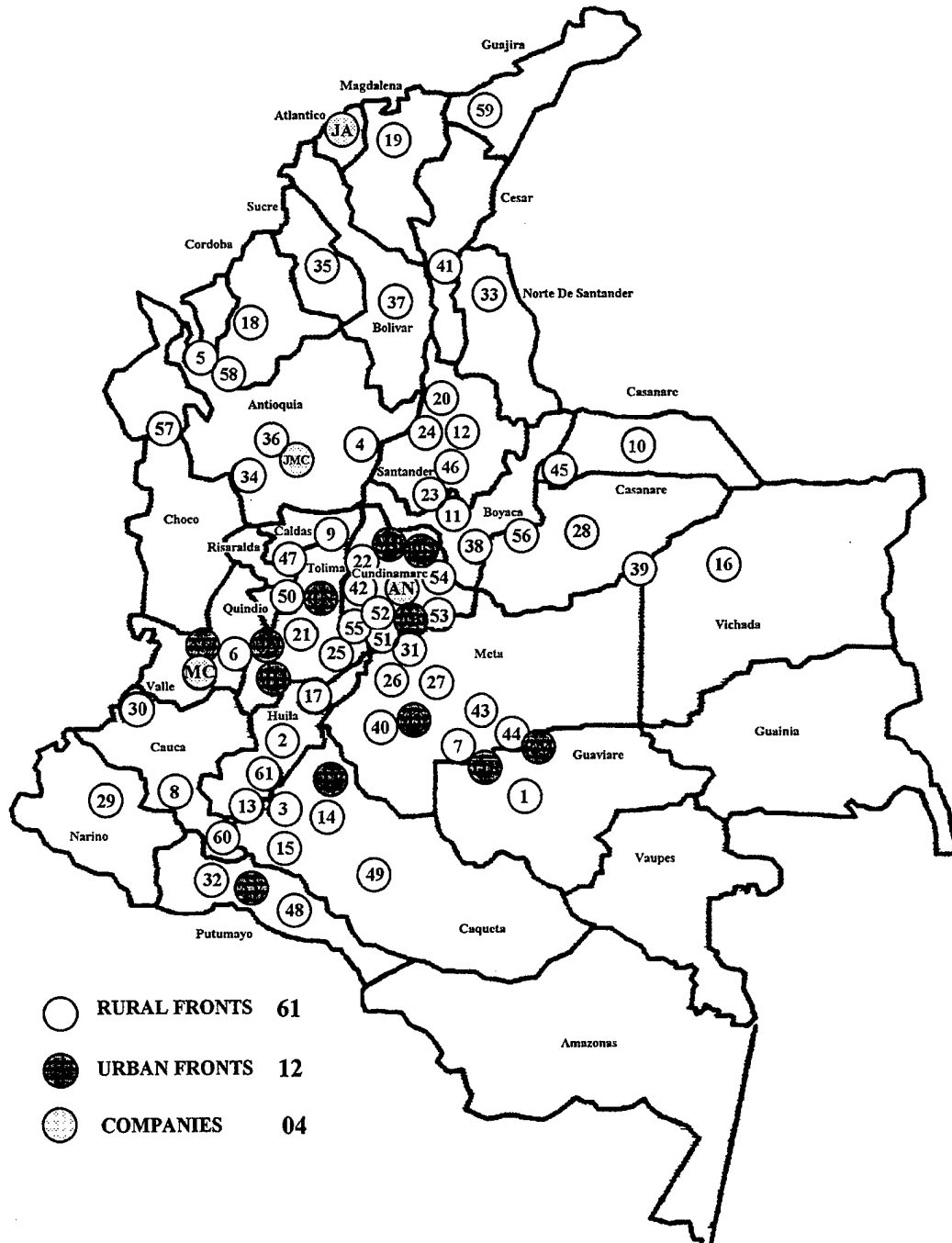


Figure 6. Guerrilla Fronts - FARC

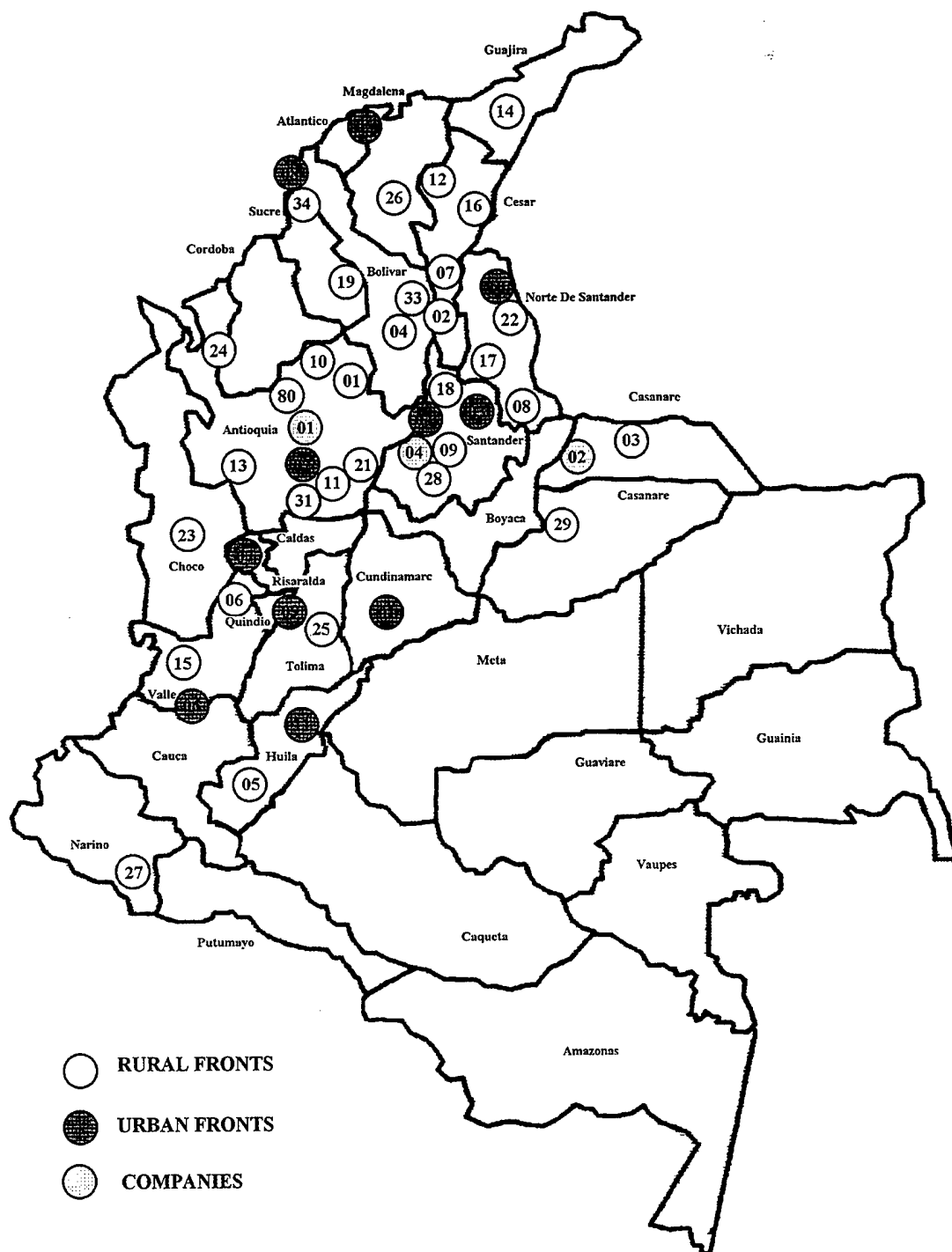


Figure 7. Guerrilla Fronts - ELN

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